

71015


VOL. XCV

NUMBER 565

1 666

LIPPINCOTT'S
MAGAZINE

JANUARY, 1915

The Man at Stony Lonesome

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A Complete Novel

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"The Smuggler," etc.

FROM the very first I was opposed to going into the country. It seemed such a foolish thing to close the large, comfortable town house, and rent something furnished with other people's things, without ever looking at it. But that is exactly what my brother John did, and I was powerless to do anything but express an opinion—which I did without waiting to be asked.

John listened with the long-suffering patience and polite attention that can be so irritating.

"It seems best to me, Clara," he said finally, "and all arrangements are made. I don't, of course, want to leave the girls in town during the

hot weather, and I don't like the idea of a hotel for them, either. This place is ideal in summer, I am told, and it will not hurt them to spend the winter there, if we are obliged to stay away a year."

He sighed as he spoke, and moved restlessly in his chair, and I had not another word to say. John had been ill with a nervous breakdown, due to too much Stock Exchange and not enough fresh air, and was ordered abroad to rest and recuperate for a year.

"We will go, Clara," he had said to me, "provided you will stay with the girls. Otherwise, I should not be satisfied to leave them."

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Of course I promised. I would have agreed to anything when I looked at his hollow eyes and thin white hands, and remembered how nearly we had lost him. One will assent to anything when one's affections are involved, especially when no time is allowed for mature deliberation.

There were four of the girls, Sylvia, Isabel, and the twins. Sylvia was twenty, the twins not yet seventeen, and Isabel came somewhere in between. While I am, of course, very fond of my nieces, I must admit that they are a great responsibility to any one afflicted with a highly conscientious and rather nervous organization. In fact, I might as well say plainly that the prospect of a year absolutely devoted to their society was not the unalloyed pleasure to me that it might be to their parents. As it turned out, we did not spend a year together—but that is anticipating.

"Clara," said my sister-in-law, pausing in the midst of her packing, "they are all dear girls, but you will remember that they are very young, won't you?"

I assented briefly. It seemed to me that this fact was self-evident and needed no special attention drawn to it.

"I only mention it," she resumed, "because, naturally, they would be more thoughtful if they were older. Isabel has a delicate throat, and the twins both catch cold easily. They have to be watched about sitting out of doors damp evenings—all girls love it, you know. And Sylvia—"

"Yes," I said, "and Sylvia?"

Mary did not answer immediately. She gave some directions to a maid, and then sat lost in thought.

"Well," I said briskly, "is it her throat or lungs, and must Sylvia be watched, too?"

"Yes," said Mary; "Sylvia must,

indeed, be watched. But it is not her lungs, Clara; it's her heart."

I was not surprised. I have made it a point to be surprised at nothing where John's family is concerned. And I did not ask any questions, either, knowing perfectly well that I should find out all I wanted to hear without seeming too much interested; and I did.

Sylvia's heart-trouble, it seemed, was of an alarming nature, at least to her mother, and was clearly traceable to one Beverly Adams.

"Josephine Beverly's boy?" I asked.

"Yes," said Mary. "Poor Josephine! She was a friend of yours, wasn't she? But the boy is like his father—Adams through and through."

"Sam was a bad lot," I admitted. "The best thing he ever did for his wife was to die and leave her. But, after all, he was somehow attractive; he had a way with him."

"I know," agreed Mary, "and so has his son. That's the worst of it. But I won't have Sylvia's heart broken by him. She shall never live the life his mother lived, and some day she'll be grateful to me."

Mary is one of those very mild women who are adamant and inflexible of purpose when once really aroused. While she adored all her children, Sylvia was her soul's idol, for whom nothing was quite good enough, and she confidently expected the girl to make a brilliant marriage. I saw she was in deadly earnest about young Adams, and was surprised to find myself inclined to sympathize with Sylvia. Doubtless the boy *had* a way with him—like his father.

"Well, Mary," I said, "I'll do my best, but if things go wrong, don't blame me too much. You can never tell which way a cat will jump, or what a girl will do next."

And further than this I declined to commit myself.

John told me a little about the place he had rented, but not much.

"I know Colonel Gower, the owner, very well in a business way, Clara," he said. "He has been very successful, indeed. Plunged heavily on practically nothing, and came out on top. He's still plunging, so far as I know, and still on top. But, then, I've been out of it all for some time, and things move rapidly these days."

"Why does he want to rent his place?" I inquired.

"I fancy it is chiefly as an accommodation to me. I was once able to do him a favor, and he has always insisted on feeling under obligations, although his debt was paid long ago, with interest. I get the place at a very nominal figure—servants, motors, boats, and the whole thing. He does not want to close or sell it, he says, and his wife does not care to stay there now."

"Have they children?" I was beginning to feel quite interested.

"A son and a daughter, both grown. I believe I said, Clara, that I know Colonel Gower only in a business way. I have never met any of his family."

John closed his eyes and turned away, as though to sleep, so I thought it best to say no more just then. I fully intended to renew the subject next day, for it seemed to me I ought to find out all I could about the Gowers, if I was going to live for a year in their house; but there was so much hurry and confusion about finishing the packing and closing the house that I had no opportunity.

We all went down to the pier to see John and Mary off on the *Mauretania*. Mary kissed me abstractedly, with one eye on Sylvia as she did it.

"Remember," she said, and I am quite sure Charles the First did not speak more impressively.

We went directly from the dock to the station, to take the train for our new home.

I do not recall much about the journey, except that the twins talked without ceasing all the way, while Sylvia and Isabel planned countless week-end parties, and that I was quite fagged when at last we collected our belongings and stepped out on the platform. It was raining and very dark, I recollect, and as the brightly-lighted train moved away I felt as though, in spite of my fatigue, I should like to return to my comfortable chair in the Pullman.

Isabel brought me to my senses with a request for the trunk-checks. I learned later that it usually *was* Isabel who came to the fore when there was anything practical to be done. She had been interviewing a leather-clad man who had appeared, steaming, from inside the station.

"Aunt Clara," she said, "this is——"

"Davis, miss," he supplied, "the chauffeur."

"This is Davis, Aunt Clara, and there's the motor. For goodness' sake, let's get in!"

She motioned toward what looked like two red eyes gleaming wickedly at us through the darkness, but Davis stepped to my side and addressed me respectfully.

"Is this Miss Wayne? I have a letter for you, madam, from Colonel Gower. Let me take your bag."

He took my breath at the same time. Why should Colonel Gower write to me? I stood turning the square white envelope over in a dazed manner until Isabel suggested that I open it, when I stepped inside the little station and broke the seal.

MY DEAR MISS WAYNE:

I very much regret that I am unable

personally to welcome you and your nieces to my house, but am obliged to delegate that pleasure to my son. The entire place is at your disposal, with certain small reservations which he will explain to you, and I hope you and the young ladies will be comfortable and contented there. If I can do anything for you, in any way, I trust you will at once let me know. My son, of course, will always have my address.

Hoping that your brother may soon be completely restored to health, believe me

Sincerely yours,
SOLOMON GOWER.

I folded the letter and returned it to its envelope mechanically. Surely it was very civil in Colonel Gower to write to me, yet somehow the sight of his handwriting prejudiced me against him most unreasonably. There was something so firm and decided about the way he crossed his t's and dotted his i's, that I felt a sudden sympathy for his wife. My mind's eye instinctively pictured her as apprehensive about the morning coffee, and always professing to prefer the least comfortable chair or the coldest corner of the hearth—you know the type.

"It certainly was not necessary to have his son at the house," I said somewhat testily, thinking it was Sylvia who had entered and stood beside me. It happened to be Davis, and I regretted the remark immediately. He looked impassively wooden, after the manner of well-trained servants, yet I thought I detected a twinkle in the corner of his eye, which was naturally irritating under the circumstances.

Davis had come to say that the baggage had been looked after, and that the young ladies were waiting in the motor, so when I was ready—a respectful but suggestive pause, and I hastened to join my nieces.

It seemed to me that ride would never end. It was so dark that even with the lamps we could only see a few yards ahead, and the rain fell

steadily. After a while, I realized we were climbing a hill. We went up and up, slipping a little now and then in spite of the chains which Davis had assured me rendered skidding impossible. What lay on either side of us I did not know, so I shut my eyes and tried to think of a suitable prayer. The only thing that suggested itself was that portion of the Litany where we ask to be delivered from battle, murder and sudden death, and as it appeared appropriate I murmured it fervently.

At last, with a sharp turn disturbing to overstrung nerves, we left the main road and plunged into what seemed to be a black abyss. I could dimly see shadowy forms that I supposed were trees standing close together, and there was a pleasantly pungent odor that suggested pines. From the many and devious curves we took, I supposed we were following a winding drive that would bring us to the house, so I breathed a sigh of heartfelt relief, and began to think of bedroom slippers and hot tea.

"What's that?" cried Sylvia, "Oh, what is it?"

"Don't be silly," I said, trying to speak severely. "It is the wind in the trees."

But it was nothing of the kind, for even as I spoke it came again—a cry low at first, then rising in rapid crescendo into a shriek that froze my blood. The twins screamed also, and Sylvia hid her face on my shoulder, but Isabel leaned out and tried to look into the impenetrable darkness, while I called to Davis to stop. He did so immediately, and came to the side of the car, mud-stained and dripping, but still respectfully imperturbable.

"There is nothing to be alarmed about, ladies," he said, "it was only Cæsar, the gardener's dog. The brute is chained up to-night, so he

howls now and then. I am sorry he startled you, but, really, you've no need to be frightened. The house is very near now."

"A dog," quavered Sylvia—"only a dog?"

"Only a dog," he assured her, "and not vicious at that, miss. He is quite harmless."

But Sylvia would not lift her face from my shoulder, and continued to shiver apprehensively, so I gave the order to hurry on, being more anxious than ever for light and warmth.

A few moments later we drew up beneath the porte-cochère, with a cheerful tooting of the horn. The large hall doors were flung hospitably open, a servant ran out to take our bags, and on the threshold stood a young man in evening dress, presumably Colonel Gower's son, who was waiting to welcome us.

I was the last to get out, and as I took my hand-bag from Davis (he had been fishing on the floor of the motor for it) I said to him in what I flatter myself is my most impressive manner:

"Davis, I know dogs and I know people. Moreover, I am quite familiar with the noises they make, collectively and individually."

I paused significantly, and waited for a reply.

"Yes, ma'am," said Davis, unmoved.

For sheer stupidity, commend me to the modern, well-trained servant! I was about to speak more plainly when I realized that the young man in evening dress had come out to the motor, and was standing bareheaded beside me.

"This is Miss Wayne?" he said. "I am Stephen Gower, and I am very glad to welcome you to Stony-Lonesome."

CHAPTER II

So far I have mentioned the twins

but casually. There are some subjects for which I find words totally inadequate, so even now I will be brief. In the first place, I could not tell them apart, which caused them the liveliest satisfaction and annoyed me excessively. Whenever I thought I had discovered some distinguishing mark of dress or ribbon, they delighted to retire, privately to effect an exchange, and then watch for results. Then, too, I could never tell what they would say or do next, which was naturally disturbing to a well-balanced organization like mine. They had been christened Dorothy and Mary, so it was a foregone conclusion that they would be called Dolly and Polly, and they called each other Johnny—just why no one understood. When I add that they were already extremely pretty, and could talk for an hour without making one sensible remark, you will understand how I felt about them.

Therefore, I was not especially gratified when they appeared in my room that first evening, as I was resting in an easy chair before a cheerful wood-fire, thinking over the events of the day.

They wore pink silk kimonas and those ridiculous little boudoir caps of frilled lace and ribbon the girls of the present day affect, and were evidently bubbling over with the desire to talk.

"May we sit down?" they chorused, and did so at once, Turkish fashion, on either side of the hearth-rug. They smiled and nodded at me with great content, and I absently noted that one cap had pink ribbon and blue forget-me-nots and the other blue ribbon and pink rosebuds. Otherwise they were indistinguishable.

"I'm Dolly," announced Pink Rosebuds. "Don't worry about trying to distinguish us."

"I am not at all worried," I re-

turned. "Of course I know you are Dorothy."

Dolly giggled and turned to her sister.

"Just think, Johnny, she knew it all the time! Isn't Aunt Clara clever?"

"Right you are, Johnny," agreed Polly, dimpling so irresistibly that I found myself smiling when I had meant to frown.

"Isn't this house perfectly ripping?" continued Polly. "We have a regular suite, almost as nice as this. And if we want anything, we have only to press a button—like 'The Arabian Nights,' you know, only they clapped their hands."

"What did you want?" I asked, always apprehensive where the twins were concerned.

"Oh, just to see what would happen. There were three of them, Aunt Clara, and we *had* to investigate. So Dolly touched the top one, and in two minutes a boy in blue livery with *millions* of buttons was right there. We couldn't think of anything we wanted, so we asked for the daily papers and got them right off."

Here Polly paused for breath, and Dolly took the floor.

"Then Polly pushed the middle button, and this time it was a maid with a perky little cap, so we asked if the trunks had come. She said yes, and should she unpack and help us undress, as she had charge of those rooms and was always at our service. Think of it, Johnny, a maid always at *our service*!"

Dorothy assumed the tone of a respectfully admiring maid:

"Will you wear white satin and pearls, my lady, or black velvet and point lace?"

"The black velvet, Hortense," instantly responded Polly, "with the diamond stars and tiara, and don't forget the ermine opera-cloak."

Then they giggled ecstatically, and Dolly resumed her story:

"There was only one button left, so we hurried up to punch it and see what we'd draw next. I expected a major-domo, or the chauffeur of our private touring-car, at the very least, but there's where we got stung. It was really queer, wasn't it, Johnny?"

Polly nodded emphatically, and I began to listen with more interest.

"Well?" I said, for Dolly had paused and seemed for once at a loss for appropriate words.

"Well, Aunt Clara, it *was* queer. We touched the button and waited for the respectful knock we expected, but it didn't come."

"What happened?"

"The door opened, Aunt Clara—the knob didn't seem to turn, but it opened—and there stood a—a woman."

"What sort of woman?"

Dorothy turned to her sister.

"You tell it," she said, and Polly, nothing loath, continued glibly:

"Well, she was a mixture of 'Lady Macbeth' and 'Beatrice Cenci' and—what's that murdering old queen?—'Bloody Mary,' all in one. She didn't say a word, but just looked at us with her great big eyes and waited, and—well, we never said a word either, but simply stared back at her, like two ninnies. Then she—faded."

"Faded?"

"I don't know what else to call it, Aunt Clara. She must have backed away gradually, of course, knowing that we didn't really want anything, but that's what it looked like. And I know she was furious with us for ringing, by the way she glared."

"Was she a servant?"

"I suppose so"—Dolly's tone was distinctly puzzled—"yet she looked more like a tragedy queen. And she didn't wear a cap or an apron."

"It was probably the housekeep-

er," I suggested. "No doubt your useless ringing of bells annoyed her, as it would any sensible woman."

Polly yawned exhaustively and scrambled to her feet.

"Well, she needn't be afraid I'll ring that particular bell again," she declared. "I don't fancy the lady's looks. Come on, Johnny. I vote for bed."

At the door they paused, and Pink Rosebuds sweetly wished me pleasant dreams.

"Thank you, Dolly," I returned. "Good-night."

Whereupon she chortled with delight.

"I'm Polly, and I have been all the time. That's one on you again, Aunt Clara."

Left alone, I abandoned myself to the delights of physical comfort, and resumed my meditations. John had not prepared me for the luxury with which we were surrounded. Even the superficial examination I had been able to make that evening had convinced me that this was an establishment of no ordinary kind. Rich rugs and hangings, with softly-blended colors, rare and beautiful pieces of statuary, and well chosen pictures met the eye everywhere, while noiseless, well-trained servants seemed always at hand ready to anticipate every want.

It had been pleasant when I arrived to find a capable maid waiting in my room with a cup of hot tea and a comfortable dressing-gown. Pleasant also to adopt her suggestion and rest among the soft pillows of my dressing-room couch and direct her while she unpacked. She had inquired whether I would have dinner served in my room, or go to the dining-room, where Mr. Stephen Gower awaited me. Every muscle of my tired body clamored for a tray beside my couch, but my strong sense of duty forced me to rise and dress;

for I knew that nothing except broken legs would prevent my nieces from joining Mr. Gower in the dining-room, and I meant him to understand that they were efficiently chaperoned.

We had a perfectly served and perfectly cooked dinner—somewhat too elaborate, I thought, just as the forks were too heavy; but the linen was the most beautiful I had ever seen (I am somewhat of a judge of linen), and the fragile cups in which coffee was served would have delighted a connoisseur.

With renewed interest, I looked across the flower-decked table at Stephen Gower, as he did the honors of his father's house. I saw a man not so young as I had at first supposed, smooth-shaven, blond, and immaculate in every detail, with the easy, pleasant manners of a man of the world. Like the forks and the dinner, he was, perhaps, a little superfine for the occasion; but his voice was cultivated, his language good, and his manner pleasantly deferential.

"I will stay here to-night, if I may, Miss Wayne," he had said to me, "and show you around the place to-morrow. After that, I will efface myself entirely, unless you are good enough to ask me to drop in and see you now and then."

I was surprised to learn that he would be in the neighborhood, and said so in a voice I carefully endeavored to keep indifferent.

"Oh, I have a bungalow further up the coast," he replied. "I seldom stay in this house when the family are here, but usually make my bachelor shack my headquarters in summer. I am there now for a bit, with two or three congenial spirits, and that is why my father delegated to me the pleasure of welcoming you to Stony-Lonesome."

And surely he had welcomed us

most cordially. An attentive and entertaining host during dinner, he had tactfully excused himself after coffee, with the remark that we were doubtless tired and would like to retire early, and I for one had thankfully adopted his suggestion.

Outside the rain fell steadily, but in my room all was light, warmth, and comfort, and I was just beginning to feel pleasantly drowsy when the twins arrived upon the scene. I did not attach much importance to what they told me, knowing their custom of exaggerating trifles in order to make a good story, but they had effectually roused me, and I could no longer doze before the fire, with the delightfully disconnected thoughts that pass in and out of one's mind when half asleep.

I began to speculate about John's connection with Colonel Gower. What favor could my brother have done him that carried with it a sense of obligation sufficient to warrant our presence in this house? I felt sure he had not realized its size when he had accepted the offer. "Colonel Gower's cottage on the New England coast," he had casually mentioned, among other possibilities, and I had imagined the usual summer bungalow of the well-to-do, with a boat or two and some conveyances, perhaps even a small motor-car. I remembered the dinner we had just eaten, and glanced about the suite of rooms reserved for my use.

"Cottage indeed!" I ejaculated, as I responded to a gentle tap at my door.

It was Isabel this time. Brush in hand and with a mane of brown hair over her shoulders, she, in turn, took possession of the hearth-rug and evidently had something to say. I rocked comfortably and waited, wondering idly why John's daughters seemed to have such a rooted aversion to chairs.

Isabel brushed vigorously for a few minutes in silence. Then she asked a question:

"What do you think of Stephen Gower, Aunt Clara?"

It was so exactly the question I had been asking myself and had been unable to answer satisfactorily, that for a moment I was startled out of my customary poise, and I replied by a counter-question:

"What do *you*?"

There was nothing undecided in Isabel's answer.

"I don't like him a little bit, and I wish he wasn't going to hang about here all summer. It will spoil everything to have him always snooping around."

"My dear Isabel," I returned, surprised to find myself on the defensive for Mr. Gower, "surely you're unjust. So far he has been most polite, and he really welcomed us very cordially."

"Yes, he did," reluctantly agreed Isabel, "but we aren't his guests exactly, so why was it necessary for him to welcome us at all? And you may say what you please, Aunt Clara, he *does* snoop."

Isabel paused, but I did not again take up the defense, so she continued unchecked:

"I wanted to speak to Polly this evening, so I went across the hall and opened a door I thought was hers, but it led into a sort of back passage, and there was the elegant Mr. Gower talking most confidentially to a—woman."

"One of the maids?"

"Well, I suppose so, Aunt Clara; but she didn't look the part for she wore no cap or apron, and she wasn't young and pretty. She looked rather angry, now I think of it, sort of unhand-me-villain-or-you-die expression, you know."

I recalled the twins' description of the person who had responded to

their third bell, and waited to hear more.

"He was talking very earnestly to her in a low voice, and had his hand under her elbow, as though to help her along. When he saw me he stopped short, and she went on down the passage. Oh, it's really nothing, of course, but somehow I didn't like it in him."

Isabel had finished brushing, and had braided her hair into two long tails. She sat with her arms around her knees, staring dreamily into the fire, until I roused her with a suggestion of bed.

"Should you say his eyes were black, Aunt Clara, or very dark blue? And is his nose purely Grecian or simply *chiseled*? While I don't approve of him, I must admit he is interesting. Did you happen to notice his legs?"

"No," I said tartly; "I certainly did not, and I must say, Isabel, I'm surprised at you."

My niece laughed and scrambled to her feet.

"Well, Aunt Clara, I assure you they're well worth looking at. To think he would condescend to be *whispering* to a servant!"

And with a tragic gesture Isabel vanished. She had less claim to real beauty than any of the girls, but I thought her very attractive with her honest gray eyes, clear, pale complexion, and trim, slender figure. Her mouth was rather larger than she liked to remember, but the red lips curved sweetly, displaying very white teeth when she smiled, and as life so far had been a huge joke to all the girls, Isabel smiled very often. Moreover, she had plenty of common-sense, which in the long run is an invaluable asset. Her mother had described her on one occasion by saying:

"I know Isabel is not really pretty, Clara, but she has such a dear little

face, and you can always depend on her in an emergency."

She was my favorite niece, and I had supposed her to have a well-balanced mind, so I was much surprised at her concluding remarks, and also a little disturbed by them.

I had now been visited by all the girls except Sylvia, so, after waiting a few minutes, I concluded she was tired enough to go sensibly to bed, and decided to follow her example.

As I undressed, I noticed three electric buttons by my bed, apparently like the ones that had excited the twins' curiosity. Although I had not been much impressed by their story, my eyes unconsciously sought the lower button and remained focussed there. I became conscious of an irresistible inclination to touch it. It was not, of course, curiosity on my part, but the natural desire to know something about our new home, that caused me, after mature deliberation, firmly to press the lowest button.

And nothing whatever happened, for no one answered. After waiting a reasonable time, I rang again, and waited with slightly quickened pulses, but, as before, there was no response. I then touched the second button, and almost immediately there was a slight tap at my door.

"I have been ringing for some time," I said. "Why did no one answer?"

The maid looked surprised.

"Your bell just rang, Miss Wayne. I came at once."

"It was the lowest button I touched," I explained. "Where does it communicate?"

"I have not been here very long," said the girl, "and don't know much about the house yet, but I think these were Mrs. Gower's rooms, and probably that bell was for her personal maid. It is disconnected now, but I will speak to the housekeeper and have it put in order, if you wish."

I told the girl this was not necessary, and dismissed her with a request to be called at eight o'clock the next morning. Then I locked my door and went to bed.

I did not go to sleep at once, but lay luxuriously enjoying the lavender-scented linen, and watching the glowing embers in the fireplace slowly fade to ashes. The wind blew through the widely opened windows with a salty freshness delightfully invigorating in spite of the fine rain, almost mist, that occasionally drifted into the room. Through the windows, too, came the steady boom of the surf, and I realized that my bedroom was on the ocean side of the house, and that we must be very near the water. I was wondering idly whether Mrs. Gower, as well as myself, had loved to listen to the noise of the waves, when I fell asleep.

Suddenly I awakened to find myself sitting straight up in bed, listening intently. It was very still, and, after switching on the light and assuring myself that everything was all right, I lay down again, believing I had been the victim of nightmare. I had only just put out the light when I heard a soft knock at the door, repeated more insistently after a moment's silence.

It was Sylvia who stood there, when I finally mustered courage to respond by opening the door about two inches; a very white and frightened Sylvia, who clung to me with a hysterical gasp that was half a sob.

"Did you hear it, Aunt Clara? Did you hear it?"

I drew her into the room and securely locked the door before I asked what she had heard.

"It was that dog again," she said in a half-whisper. "I wish it was dead. And the clocks! Oh, Aunt Clara, *the clocks!* They have been striking all night—just over and over. I'm frightened, oh, I'm frightened!"

"Sylvia," I said, trying to speak severely, for I was frightened myself, "stop trembling this minute! Have you lost your senses? Why on earth shouldn't the clocks strike?"

But Sylvia was entirely beyond reason, and it was some time before she was calm enough to speak coherently.

"It was the two big eight-day clocks, Aunt Clara," she managed to say at last; "one on the landing, you know, and the other in the lower hall."

I remembered them very well, having paused on my way to bed to examine and admire them.

"I went to sleep as soon as my head touched the pillow, and then that dog"—here Sylvia shivered again—"began to howl. I heard him twice, then he stopped, but I was wide awake by that time. I thought I heard steps going softly by my door, but I wasn't frightened, for I hoped some of the servants were going to call in the dog."

"What next?" I asked, for she had again paused and was listening.

"I thought I heard something breathing, but I suppose I'm nervous. Well, the clock on the landing struck one, and so did the one in the hall, immediately after it, then in just a minute they struck two, then three, and so on around to twelve. Then, Aunt Clara, they began again right away and *did it all over again!*"

Sylvia paused dramatically, but I was so relieved I could actually smile naturally, for the explanation was so obvious.

"Nonsense!" I said. "You are nervous and excited and imagine things. Both clocks struck twelve—one a little behind the other. It's perfectly simple if you will only think it out calmly."

But Sylvia was not to be convinced, and was so really frightened

and unnerved that I decided to keep her with me for the rest of the night, and thought myself justified in giving her some bromide to quiet her nerves; but it was long before the drug took effect and I knew by her quiet breathing that she was asleep.

As for me, I lay there broad awake until the dim, gray light of dawn told me the night was past. The clocks struck the hours, and I counted carefully, but found nothing unusual in their methods. Once I thought I heard the dog, but very faintly, as though shut up somewhere, and I resolved to complain about it to Stephen Gower in the morning.

With this exception, all was quiet and peaceful, and as it grew light I, too, fell asleep, quite exhausted by the journey and by subsequent events.

CHAPTER III

It was a beautiful world that greeted us the next morning. Everything seemed freshly washed and burnished for our special delectation, and the breeze that caused the thin white curtains to curve inward like inflated sails brought new life and vigor with it.

I went to my bedroom window and stood entranced. It was a deep bay, jutting abruptly outward, with nothing above or below it. I afterward learned it had been added after the house was completed, to gratify some caprice of Mrs. Gower, and was the despair of the architect, who rightly contended that a sheet iron excrescence was an unsightly addition to his symmetrical stone walls.

But such a window from within! It was built like a sun parlor, with barely room enough for the frames which went from floor to ceiling, and opened outward like doors in two parts, so that it was possible to close the top or bottom at will; and every-

where—before me, below me, and on either side—was the ocean.

This morning it laughed a greeting, with little rippling, white-crested waves leaping over one another and sparking in the sunshine as far as the eye could reach, while nearer the shore the breakers rose majestically, deep green and opalescent as they rested an instant before hurling themselves against the coast.

Sylvia came and joined me at the window, her eyes hazy with sleep, and her bright hair gleaming where the sun touched it. Together we stood in silence, and then Sylvia spoke.

"How I love the sea!" she remarked. "We'll have a nice summer, Aunt Clara, even if we don't find any one to play with us."

Then suddenly, apparently from directly beneath us, a little skiff darted out into the sparkling water. With wide-spread sail it skimmed gracefully along like a white-winged bird trying its strength before rising to take flight. Then, as suddenly as it had appeared, it reversed its course and headed for home.

As the sail dipped the other way, I noticed the man standing at the tiller. Evidently he had come out for his morning dip, for he wore a blue bathing-suit, and his dark hair looked wet and shining in the strong sunlight. He was singing, and as he came nearer we caught the refrain and were assured in a very acceptable baritone that for Bonnie Annie Laurie he'd lay him down and dee. He went on to tell us that

Her brow is like the snowdrift,
Her neck is like the swan,
Her face it is the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on.

Here he paused, evidently at a loss for the next line, and, going back to the beginning, rehearsed the beauties of brow and neck with no better luck:

THE MAN AT STONY-LONESOME

That e'er the sun shone on,
he repeated joyously.

And dark blue is her e'e.

I stared in amazement, for the missing line was supplied by Sylvia in a very pure, sweet soprano, and quite regardless of the sketchiness of her costume. The song from the boat ceased while the singer, after one swift upward glance, sat down abruptly on the side of the skiff, which promptly capsized.

We leaned still farther out and gazed in impotent horror at the upturned boat and the rippling expanse of water. It was only an instant, of course, but it seemed hours before a black head bobbed up and swam serenely to the boat, righted it, and climbed in as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Then he glanced up again at our window.

"Thank you," he had the audacity to shout, with a gleam of white teeth and a comprehensive sweep of the arm, as the sail filled and the skiff again shot outward.

Then, and not till then, I regained my senses, and beat a hasty retreat, dragging my reluctant niece after me.

"Oh, Sylvia," I began, "how could you?"

"I don't know, Aunt Clara," she said. "It just *came*. I did not know I was going to do it. Anyhow, it doesn't matter for it was only——"

Here Sylvia paused suddenly and began to laugh.

"Oh, Aunt Clara," she gasped, "have you any idea how we look? Just see!"

I knew only too well what the mirror would reveal, so indignantly put aside the one she offered me. Now, Sylvia fresh from slumber is one thing, but I am quite another proposition. With my puffs and transformation in place, I usually feel able

to cope with almost any situation, but without them I am at a disadvantage and do not care to face the world, collectively or individually. Sylvia still giggled hysterically.

"As soon as he saw us," she gasped, "he capsized. I wonder which one of us knocked him over."

I looked at the girl with her fair, curly hair ruffled into an aureole about her lovely face—for Sylvia *was* lovely—and remembered that I had not washed off the cold cream or released my front hair from magic curlers.

"Whoever it was," I said severely, "should not have been so near the house. He deserved the ducking for trespassing."

Sylvia stared.

"Didn't you recognize him, Aunt Clara?"

"How on earth should I?"

"It was the man who met us at the station—Davis."

It was my turn to stare stupidly.

"Davis?" I repeated. "Davis?"

Sylvia nodded.

"The chauffeur, you know. He"—meditatively—"looks awfully well in a bathing-suit, doesn't he? He was quite stunning standing in that little boat. Just like one of Christy's illustrations, don't you think so, Aunt Clara?"

"No," I snapped; "I do *not*. But I think the whole thing was most impertinent in him. You had better go and dress, Sylvia."

That morning I went through the house with Stephen Gower.

"It is all entirely at your service, Miss Wayne," he said, "with a few necessary exceptions, where some purely personal property belonging to my mother and sister is stored. These three small rooms at the end of the passage, and the top floor, which you will not want at all, are reserved. I hope you will find everything you need. My father is most

anxious that you should be comfortable."

Comfortable! I glanced around the large piazza, where we chanced to be standing, and down to the broad driveway, where a motor was waiting to take the girls into the village. The sound of a piano came through the open window, and off to the left I could see the twins vigorously playing tennis.

I was vaguely conscious that my companion watched me closely as he waited for my reply, but when I looked up he was calmly rolling a cigarette.

"If you are ready," he said, "I should like to take you through the stables and about the grounds a bit, to help you get your bearings."

We went around to the back, toward the sea, where we found a flight of stone steps.

"Oh," I said, and paused in astonishment.

Straight up from the water rose a huge rock, or rather boulder. Grim, forbidding, and almost perpendicular, it loomed darkly above the bright water, and cast its shadow on the sunlit waves. And on this rock the house was built.

Stephen Gower smiled and lighted a fresh cigarette.

"I thought it would surprise you," he said. "This rock is quite unique, Miss Wayne. Do you see how abruptly it rises, and how massive it is? At the back it juts out over the water, but in front a little grading and terracing brought the land up to it. My father was infatuated with the rock as soon as he saw it, and insisted on building here. It was a pile of trouble to work out his ideas, but it interested and amused him, so I suppose it's all right."

"It's wonderful," I said slowly, "wonderful."

"It took quite a bit of engineering

to get things in shape," he remarked. "The cellars are blasted from the rock, for it extends far back into the land. The house is bolted and clamped down, besides being built upon steel frames. You have a very firm foundation beneath you, Miss Wayne, and need not be afraid in the fiercest storm."

He showed me the cellars, the boat-house with its many pleasure-boats and floating dock. There was a bath-house also in this wonderful cavern upon which the house stood, but at its door he paused.

"I have forgotten the key," he said. "This was built for my mother and sister, and we never used it. The bath-house for the men is a bit further down the beach—just around the curve, so it will not be a blot on the landscape."

I noticed for the first time that the beach curved outward just above us so abruptly that it almost formed a small peninsula.

Mr. Gower was trying the bath-house door.

"I will get the key for you from the housekeeper," he said, "although really, Miss Wayne, the bathing is not very good, for the beach is treacherous. It shelves sharply and is full of holes, so unless the young ladies are expert swimmers it might be better not to attempt it."

I registered an inward vow that although I would get that key, it should never leave my possession for a moment, nor should the girls know of the existence of the bath-house.

As we turned to leave the beach, I paused to look again at the rock. My companion paused also.

"It interests you, doesn't it?" he said. "You can see now where the place got its name. There is no other rock anywhere around, and it looked so solitary and alone that my mother was inspired to call it Stony-Lonesome. Do you like it?"

"I don't know," I said slowly. "It is surely appropriate, at any rate. I am chilled down in this shadow. Let us get back to the sunshine.

Stephen Gower laughed, and gave me his hand to help me up the steps, which were wet with spray and felt cold and damp. At the top, however, we found the sunshine, and as we walked through the gardens, already ablaze with bloom, I stopped shivering and regained my spirits. The pine grove that stood in front of the house was delightful, this morning, with its carpeting of slippery needles and its pungent spicy odor. I looked up through low-branching trees to vistas of sky, vividly blue, and flecked with tiny white clouds, then away through more trees, forming in the distance a dark screen through which the wide drive showed white now and then as it followed its tortuous course to the main road.

"I feel as if I were miles away from civilization," I remarked as we strolled along.

"It is entirely private here, I assure you, Miss Wayne."

Something in Stephen Gower's voice caused me to glance at him hastily. He was looking away through the trees, with his eyes narrowed and his rather thin lips set in a smile from which I involuntarily recoiled. Following the direction of his eyes, I saw a cottage built of logs, with the bark still on them. It was small, but artistically in keeping with its surroundings, and so unobtrusive that it would have escaped my attention had I not automatically looked where he did.

"The gardener's cottage," he said, and turned into a path leading to the tennis-court.

But I stopped short, overtaken by a sudden memory. Davis had said that the dog who howled was the property of the gardener, and I wanted to have a look at him.

"The gardener," I said. "Then it is *his* dog that makes night hideous?"

"Dog?" questioned my companion. "Oh, yes, of course. Did he disturb you last night? That's too bad. I'll see that it does not occur again. Now I want to show you——"

I did not wait to hear the remainder of the sentence, but started in the direction of the cottage, quite obsessed by the desire to see the gardener's dog.

As it happened, this desire was easily gratified, for the only sign of life about the house was a large hound stretched luxuriously in the sun before the door. He got lazily to his feet as I approached, looked me over thoughtfully, sniffed doubtfully at my skirts, then with a conciliatory wag of his tail returned to the sunny doorstep and resumed his nap.

"It doesn't seem possible he could make such unearthly noises," remarked my companion, "but, then, you see, he is a hound, and they are very gifted vocally."

We inspected the tennis-court, and stopped at the garage, where I endeavored to look wise while several motor-cars were displayed and their virtues elaborated by Davis, who did not refer to his morning bath, although as we turned away I certainly thought I heard the refrain of Annie Laurie. I decided that I did not like Davis.

When we returned to the house I was quite tired, and glad to sink into a comfortable chair and rest on the veranda. I don't think I have mentioned that it extended all the way around the house, giving the effect at the back, where it overlooked the ocean, of being on the deck of a steamer.

Isabel was there, swinging idly in a hammock, with an unopened book in her lap.

"How I wish I could be *on* the water to-day instead of just looking at it!" she remarked as we joined her.

"That is easily managed," promptly returned Mr. Gower. "If your aunt will kindly invite me to luncheon, we can start at once. You will come also, of course, Miss Wayne? And shall we take a motor-boat or would you rather sail?"

Now, I had not had the smallest intention of asking him to lunch, nor did I do so even now, but he seemed to consider the question settled, so I was powerless. Neither had I any desire to go boating. I am not a good sailor under the most favorable conditions, and there is an unsteadiness about water that always annoys me, so that usually nothing but vital necessity could have induced me to enter one of those alarmingly bobby little boats. Isabel knew this, and smiled so provokingly as she urged me to accompany them that I was strongly tempted to surprise her and go along. Prudence and a certain knowledge of what the results would be restrained me, so I merely stipulated that they should be home in an hour, and should select a motor-boat, as I thought it safer than sailing.

On thinking it over, I must admit I was surprised at Isabel. She it was who had come to my room only last night with strongly expressed disapproval of the very man with whom she had now gone off gaily, apparently on the best of terms. Luncheon was half over when they returned, with vigorous appetites and the air of having thoroughly enjoyed themselves, that is usually a little irritating to the stay-at-homes.

After lunch Stephen Gower really did manage to tear himself away. I, for one, was heartily glad to see the last of him, and said so in no measured tones.

"There is no reason we should see

anything more of him," I said in conclusion.

"No reason at all," agreed Isabel, "but somehow I fancy we *will*."

And we did.

CHAPTER IV

I did not forget about the bathhouse, although the subject was not mentioned again. The fact that the beach was dangerous had decided me that the girls should not take any chances about bathing, and I knew I could not rest easy until the key was in my own possession. So as soon as I could, I privately sought the housekeeper and requested it.

I cannot say that Mrs. Marlow impressed me favorably. She was a tall woman, who had once been handsome, but the form that should now have been full and stately was spare and stooped, and her manner was so stiff and frigid as to be positively repellent. She was sitting by her window, gazing out over the water, with her hands folded in her lap, and although she was absolutely idle I have never seen a more unrestful personality.

"Yes," she said, in reply to my inquiry; "I had a key to the bathhouse."

I waited for her to produce it, but as she said nothing further I ventured to make a tentative suggestion.

"I should like to have it."

Mrs. Marlow turned her large, dark eyes upon me for a moment, and I was impressed with the furtive keenness of her glance.

"I have not the key in my possession now, Miss Wayne," she said, "I gave it, with others, to Mr. Stephen Gower."

I was sure this was not true, but for some reason I had not strength of mind to insist further.

Unusual personalities have always interested me, and I determined that I would talk a little with this wo-

man, and see whether she was merely naturally ungracious or actually resentful of our presence in the house. So I sat down, uninvited, and attempted to make conversation.

"Have you been here long, Mrs. Marlow?"

"Some years."

"Of course you go away in the winter?"

"I never go away."

"No doubt you are so comfortable here you do not care to make the effort to get away."

Silence on the part of Mrs. Marlow, so I tried again!

"I especially wanted the bath-house key to keep it away from my nieces. Mr. Gower tells me the bathing is dangerous."

Again that furtive glance and the quickly averted eyes.

"Young girls are a great responsibility," I continued, not yet discouraged.

"Yes," she assented, without interest.

Again silence. Conversation with Mrs. Marlow was clearly impossible, and so I reluctantly arose to depart, with the consciousness of failure ranking in my heart. The housekeeper rose also, evidently relieved that the interview was at an end.

But just as my hand touched the door, it opened suddenly from the outside, and a woman rushed into the room.

"Oh, Mrs. Marlow," she gasped, "come—come quickly! Louise——"

Mrs. Marlow stepped hastily forward and took her by the arm.

"Julia," she said, with a little shake, "have you lost your senses? Here is Miss Wayne—you nearly knocked her down. What will she think of you?"

But Julia apparently could not collect herself enough to apologize, for with a muttered word she escaped into the pantry, where I heard her

sympathetically received by the butler, and a glass of wine suggested as a restorative. Mrs. Marlow turned quietly to me.

"I hope you will excuse her, Miss Wayne; she did not intend to be rude. Louise—the gardener's daughter—is ill. Her sudden heart-attacks are alarming, and they usually send for me. So if you will excuse me——"

Her hand was on the knob before I could answer, and I merely stood there, helpless, watching the flutter of her black skirts as she disappeared down the passage. As I turned to leave the room, I saw a bunch of keys upon the floor, and involuntarily I picked them up. Of course I examined them carefully, as any one in my place would have done. And I found what I wanted, too—at least, I thought so. A rather small key without a label seemed to me about the proper size for the lock I had seen on the bath-house door. My first impulse was to take it off and try it privately, but I thought better of it, and most unwillingly laid the bunch of keys upon the housekeeper's table.

In the front hall I found Sylvia. She was standing before the tall mahogany eight-day clock at the foot of the stairs, absorbed in studying it.

"It does not look different from any other grandfather clock, Aunt Clara," she said, "and yet——"

"It is just the same, Sylvia," I replied, rather testily. It really seemed to me that to be suspicious of clocks in broad daylight was almost irrational.

But Sylvia paid no attention to my superiority of voice and manner.

"It's going to strike," she said in an awed whisper. "Listen!"

Impressed in spite of myself, I listened intently. The clock struck four clear, bell-like notes, just as any well regulated clock should do, and

then methodically took up its regular business of ticking away time. I turned to Sylvia, but before I could speak four chimes rang out again unmistakably distinct, yet almost like an echo of the first. Sylvia paled and grasped my arm, and for an instant I admit I was startled, then common-sense came to my rescue.

"Sylvia," I exclaimed, "don't be an idiot! That was the *dining-room clock*. See here."

I led the way into the dining-room, and, sure enough, there was the duplicate of the hall clock ticking with stately dignity.

"Exactly alike," I announced triumphantly. "Of course their striking apparatus is identical, too. Don't you see?"

"Yes," said Sylvia slowly; "I see, and yet I *don't* see. Last night, Aunt Clara, everything was *double*. Both clocks kept on striking—at least, I thought so. It was awfully weird."

"You were half asleep, child, that's what the trouble was, and in a strange room. And you were tired and nervous, too! Forget the whole thing, and don't be so silly again."

I spoke briskly, and tried not to show my impatience; but to see a perfectly healthy, normal girl standing petrified before an ordinary wooden clock, gazing up at it in a respectful, not to say awestruck manner, was certainly irritating to a well-balanced organization like mine. So I left her there, still staring at the round face of the clock, and went out on the veranda, where the other girls were assembled.

They all spoke at once, the twins gesticulating wildly.

"We've seen her again!" they exclaimed.

"Seen who?" There are moments when one forgets to be strictly grammatical.

"The disappearing lady."

"Bloody Mary."

"The housekeeper?" The last from Isabel, with a rising inflection.

I settled myself comfortably in a rocking-chair.

"If you will speak quietly and one at a time, perhaps I can understand something."

"It is really nothing, Aunt Clara," said Isabel, "but we saw a tall woman running through the grounds just now. Polly thought it was the one who answered their bell last night, and I thought I had seen her before—you know I told you about it. The only strange thing was the way she ran. She certainly was a sprinter."

"It was the housekeeper," I explained; "and, for heaven's sake, don't try and get up any more mysteries or excitement about her! I have just been talking to her, and know all about it. She ran because she was in a hurry."

I told them about the illness of the gardener's daughter, and they listened with the indifference of youth.

"Well," said Dolly, "maybe she's a comfort in sickness, but I think she'd frighten *me* to death just by the glare in her eyes. Would you like her to smooth your fevered brow, Johnny?"

Polly wrinkled her forehead and looked wise.

"Do you know, Johnny, I don't believe it's the same person, after all. Don't you think our friend last night was younger and more—well *shadowy* and ghostly?"

Dolly considered the question gravely.

"Perhaps she *was* a ghost, really. The family specter that walks in darkness like the night. Maybe a murder was committed in our rooms, Johnny, and she's the avenging spirit coming to cut our throats or smother us. I wonder if she walks every evening or only sometimes. Let's take turns ringing the bell and

watching to-night, and see what will happen."

"Nonsense!" I said sharply. "You'll do nothing of the kind. From what I saw of Mrs. Marlow this morning, I know she is not a person to be trifled with, so I don't advise you to try any experiments. And don't let me hear anything more about ghosts or mysteries. I am tired of the whole subject."

"A rise out of Aunt Clara," chuckled Dolly. "Come, Johnny, let us play tennis, since there's nothing better to do just now."

So Isabel and I were left alone on the broad veranda. I waited for her to speak, knowing from experience that it was impossible for one of John's daughters to be silent very long; but she was in no hurry to begin, so I rocked and worked in placid silence for some time.

"Aunt Clara," she said at last, "it was the housekeeper I saw last night—you remember, don't you?"

I nodded, and waited for her to continue, but she relapsed again into silence. The shadows lengthened, and the ocean shimmered, peaceful and beautiful in the golden light of late afternoon. At last Isabel spoke:

"Isn't it queer how you always like best the people you are not sure about."

Perhaps Isabel was not sure about Stephen Gower, but she certainly saw enough of him during the next two or three weeks to make up her mind. They went sailing or motor-ing, and Isabel improved amazingly, growing plump, tanned, and very pretty, with a new soft light in her eyes, and a tendency to gaze at the ocean with an absorbed expression which worried me not a little.

There were long evenings on the veranda, too, with the ocean always before them, adding its voice to the charm of the summer night, and altogether I wished most heartily that

Mr. Gower's business or pleasure would summon him away, and that he would not return while my brother's girls were in my care. But he stayed just where he was, and Isabel bloomed like a rose.

CHAPTER V

We settled down very contentedly to our new life, and the girls wrote enthusiastic descriptions of everything to their mother, which I corroborated in less superlative language. But really we were most delightfully situated. As the twins inelegantly expressed it, we "positively *wallowed* in luxury," and we should have been more than human if we had not enjoyed it.

The fly in the ointment was the remoteness of the place, for Stony-Lonesome fully justified its name. There were no neighbors, and when we went into town people stared at us but made no friendly advances. The telephone never rang, the doorbell was unused, and the only vehicles except our own that turned into the drive were tradesmen's wagons bringing out the daily supplies. As Sylvia said, we seemed "awfully far away from everywhere," and sometimes at night, when I listened to the boom of the surf and heard the sighing of the wind in the pines, I wished myself in the heart of civilization once more. Then in the morning the sun would shine, the ocean laugh a greeting, and I would realize my blessings and be thankful for them.

So for two or three weeks we lived in peaceful monotony. The gardener's dog no longer disturbed the nights, the clocks measured off the hours unnoticed by Sylvia, and the household in general ran on oiled wheels. Even Stephen Gower's bungalow was closed, that gentleman having hurriedly departed for New York "upon business" as he said.

The girls had penetrated far enough along the coast to find it, and reported it commonplace and disappointing, although, as Isabel remarked, it might contain surprises enough inside.

There was really nothing for me to do but eat, sleep, and grow fat, but the girls managed to amuse themselves pretty well.

Sylvia, to my great relief, lost the languid manner and interesting pallor that had troubled her mother. She did not spend nearly as much time letter-writing as I had expected, and was no more interested in the arrival of the mail each morning than I was. Therefore, I concluded that her mother's fears about Beverly Adams were groundless.

Sylvia learned to drive a motor-car, which I thought an unwise and dangerous proceeding, although Davis assured me she was an apt pupil and with a little practice would become quite proficient. They used to go off on long drives, Isabel and the twins in the tonneau, with Sylvia at the wheel, and come home wind-blown and ravenously hungry. So I was able to write Mary that she could be content about her children, for they were all well and happy. I was fairly content, also, for Davis was an expert driver and always with them in case of emergency, so, as I said, the days passed in placid monotony for about three weeks.

Then, one stormy night, I had a slight return of my only enemy, sciatica, Isabel displayed symptoms of a feverish cold, and the family generally seemed moody and out of sorts.

"Suppose we go to bed," finally suggested Sylvia. "If we sit around here any longer, I shall surely quarrel with somebody. Perhaps in the morning we won't be quite so cross."

So we separated for the night, and I put hot water bottles to my sciatic

nerve and composed myself to sleep. But the gardener's dog interfered, for he got loose again and made night hideous. Out of the darkness came the long, unearthly wail that had greeted us the night we arrived. It came again and yet again at long intervals, and although I knew perfectly what it was, and had several times seen the dog with my own eyes, I grew cold and frightened as I listened. He should be sent away in the morning, I resolved; I would see myself that it was done.

But when morning came I forgot the dog, for Mrs. Marlow was found by the cook, lying dead at the foot of the stone steps leading down to the water.

They came early to my room with the news, and I slipped on my wrapper and went down. She lay there a huddled, shapeless mass, and they told me her neck was broken. Tightly clasped in one hand was a key which was found upon examination to fit the bath-house. Evidently she had started down the steps, slipped, and plunged to her death.

I had never liked the woman, yet as I looked at her lying there I had a curious feeling that in some way she had been deeply wronged, and that I must set it right.

"Lift her carefully," I directed. "She may still be living."

But the servants merely shrank a little further away and whispered among themselves. I knew Mrs. Marlow was not popular with them, because of her austere manner, but I was appalled at their heartlessness in leaving her where she had fallen, without any attempt to carry her to the house or even to arrange her disordered dress. The butler, however, stepped forward and answered me respectfully:

"Mrs. Marlow is quite dead, Miss Wayne. We made sure of that, of course, but we dare not move her un-

til the coroner has seen her. Davis has gone for him."

I had always admired Dawson. He was the typical English butler, and his dignity was such that when he offered me the potatoes I felt as though he were conferring some priceless boon upon me; but to-day he was distinctly excited, and very nearly approached being human. His reference to the coroner was made in a mysterious manner that invited further inquiry.

"But *why*?" I said. "It was an accident, was it not?"

Something in Dawson's face prompted the question that followed the assertion.

"We 'ope so, Miss Wayne."

I stared at him in horrified amazement, and after a moment he continued:

"You see, Miss Wayne, she might have slipped, and then again she mightn't. There's things that looks peculiar, not to say suspicious."

"What things?"

It was Isabel's voice that spoke. I had not known when she joined us, and was not pleased to see her. It was no place for a young girl, and I motioned to her to return to the house. But my niece had no idea of withdrawing. Holding her kimono around her with one hand, she thrust the other through my arm and repeated her question a little imperiously:

"What things, Dawson?"

Dawson pointed to Mrs. Marlow's clenched hand that lay white and rigid against the dark stone.

"You see, miss," he said, "she's got a bit of blue cloth clenched in 'er fist, and it does look as though she'd 'eld on precious tight to something that wasn't the stone steps, poor soul."

Now, I have always especially prided myself on my self-control and the calmness with which I could face

the inevitable; but at the suggestion that murder had been done almost beneath my windows, while we were peacefully sleeping, my knees knocked together, and I found myself clutching Isabel and vaguely trying to say something reassuring.

The arrival of Davis and the coroner created a diversion, and when the latter glanced curiously at me in passing I remembered my dishabille and retreated to the house, taking Isabel with me.

When I had dressed with my usual care, I felt better able to cope with the situation. Deplorable though it was, we were in no way responsible, I assured myself as I took a last look in the mirror before going down to breakfast. I found the girls assembled, and an unsatisfactory breakfast most indifferently served by a frightened-looking maid. Dawson was conspicuous by his absence.

The twins were bubbling with excitement and curiosity, while the older girls were grave and quiet, and made but a pretense of eating breakfast. For myself, I realized the importance of being well nourished under all circumstances, and partook of fruit, eggs, toast and coffee as usual.

"I never heard of anything so perfectly awful," remarked Dolly for the fifth time in five minutes, "and Dawson says maybe it wasn't an accident. We may all be suspected and arrested, you know—even you, Aunt Clara."

"Dolly, be quiet," interrupted Isabel.

She pushed away her plate, and, greatly to my surprise, began to cry nervously. That the self-contained Isabel, on whom I depended for assistance in any crisis, should sob and tremble and display other hysterical symptoms would have been alarming at any other time, but to-day I attributed it to the shocking sight she

had seen that morning, and which the other girls had been spared.

I advised her to take a dose of aromatic ammonia, and lie down for a while, and I was going with her to see that my prescription was followed when I perceived Dawson at the door beckoning to me. So I sent Sylvia in my place, and followed the butler into the hall, where the coroner was waiting me.

"Dr. Brownley, Miss Wayne," said Dawson, mindful, as always, of the proprieties.

Dr. Brownley was brisk and business-like. He spoke briefly and to the point:

"Upon investigation, Miss Wayne, I am convinced that Mrs. Marlow's death was not due to an accident. We found this in her hand, which proves conclusively that she was not alone."

He extended his hand and showed me a button, evidently from a man's coat, and clinging to its under side was a ragged piece of blue serge. One could imagine the agonized clutch of the dead hand that had torn the cloth from the coat, and the despair with which it had felt the button pull away.

I said nothing, but stood staring stupidly at him, and Dr. Brownley, thinking I did not grasp the situation, explained tersely:

"It is—murder, Miss Wayne."

"But who," I began—"who—?"

I could not bring myself to finish the sentence, but the coroner took it up.

"Who killed her? Well, that is what this button must help us to find out."

He turned it over with grave interest.

"You don't happen to recall any blue serge suits, do you, Miss Wayne? Well, time will show. Meanwhile, I will question the servants a little, preliminary to the in-

quest, and if you can get in touch with any of Mr. Gower's family, I would suggest you do so at once."

"I will communicate with Mr. Stephen Gower," I said. "He is now in New York, but——"

"No, he isn't, Aunt Clara."

I turned in surprise, to find that the twins had followed me into the hall and were absorbing every word of the conversation with wide-eyed excitement.

"Polly saw him yesterday," continued Dorothy. "Don't you remember, Johnny? You were so surprised, because we thought he was in New York. We would have mentioned it last night only Isabel——"

She paused suddenly.

"There, now, Johnny," she exclaimed, "I've opened my mouth and put my foot in it, as usual!"

Polly giggled nervously, and the coroner adjusted his glasses and looked at them with interest.

"Perhaps," he said, "these young ladies know where we could reach Mr. Gower to-day."

"Oh, no, we don't," cried Dolly eagerly. "Indeed, we don't really know anything at all. He—that is, they——"

I grasped my niece by the arm and held her firmly.

"Dolly," I said, "try and show a little common-sense for once. Tell me where you saw Mr. Gower, and why you did not mention it."

"Yes, Aunt Clara," said Dolly, with unexpected docility. "I'll be perfectly sensible if you will. Polly and I saw Mr. Gower on the beach yesterday afternoon, but we did not mention it at home because Isabel thought we had better not."

"Isabel?" I said, thoroughly exasperated. "What in the world has she to do with it?"

But Dolly had shaken off my restraining hand and retreated to the piazza, where, after a few more

words with Dr. Brownley, I followed, determined to sift the matter to the bottom, if possible. Nothing was to be seen of the twins, however, so I went at once to Isabel's room. She was sitting in the big chintz-covered chair by the window, looking very pale and unlike herself, and the frightened way she glanced at me showed that she was expecting unwelcome news of some sort.

It is never my habit to beat about the bush or waste time with irrelevant conversation by way of leading up to any subject, so I sat down opposite her and went straight to the point.

"Isabel, my dear," I began, determined to be kind though firm, "why did you not mention having seen Stephen Gower yesterday?"

"Didn't I mention it, Aunt Clara?"

It was not like Isabel to quibble. She is usually direct to the point of bluntness, a quality her mother deplores, but which I rather admire; so I looked searchingly at her as I replied decisively:

"No, my dear, you did not, as you very well know. And now, Isabel, you must tell me where you saw him, why you cautioned the twins not to mention it, and where he can be found to-day—if you know."

My niece tied her handkerchief into little knots before she answered, and when she spoke at last she looked out of the window and not into my eyes.

"I saw Mr. Gower yesterday, Aunt Clara. He said he had unexpectedly returned for a day only, and as he had not time to call upon you he asked me not to mention he was here."

"Where did you see him?"

"On the beach, not far from here."

"What was he doing?"

Isabel hesitated, then turned to me, her gray eyes dark and widely opened, her lips pale and tremulous.

"He was talking to Mrs. Marlow."

She was so evidently unnerved that I instinctively put out my hand and drew her to me, speaking soothingly, as to a frightened child.

"Never mind, dear, there is nothing for you to fear, you know. Won't you tell me all about it, Isabel?"

But Isabel was unable just then to tell a coherent story. She only hid her face in my lap and said in a muffled voice:

"He was with her on the beach—they seemed to be having an argument or discussion. She looked very angry and, oh, Aunt Clara, he wore a *blue serge coat*!"

For really the first time the thought that Stephen Gower might be in any way connected with this crime flashed across my mind. I was so stunned with the horror of the suggestion that I could think of nothing reassuring to say to Isabel. So I merely smoothed her hair gently and tried to regain my usual mental poise.

"Isabel, my dear," I finally began, "we must not, of course, be hasty in our judgments. But from what you have told me I very much fear that——"

"Don't say it, Aunt Clara, don't!" Isabel was on her feet now, facing me with flashing eyes. "He didn't do it, I know. Why, he couldn't—he just *couldn't*, and I know it!"

CHAPTER VI

I confess to being a puzzled woman the day following Mrs. Marlow's death, and not altogether certain of the right course to pursue, which was most annoying to one of my disposition.

My telegram to Stephen Gower's town address was reported undelivered, and the messenger sent up the beach to his bungalow returned convinced that the house was empty. I

had no way of communicating with the family except through him, yet I felt they should at once be informed of the tragedy that had occurred at Stony-Lonesome.

I knew, too, that in common decency relatives and friends should be informed of Mrs. Marlow's death, but I did not know how to reach them. Each maid I interviewed said the same thing in slightly varying words.

"I had only been here a few days when you came. Mrs. Marlow engaged me, but I don't know anything about her."

The cook at last volunteered a suggestion:

"Why not ask Dawson? Him and Mrs. Marlow engaged all the rest of us, and he ought to know somethin' about her if anybody does—so he ought."

Here she paused in a manner that seemed to invite further inquiry, and I was not slow in responding.

"What do you mean, Norah?" I said. "Were they friends?"

Norah, who had plainly begun to enjoy herself, placed a chair for me, and sat down heavily by the window, where I had first seen Mrs. Marlow. We were in the housekeeper's room, where I had interviewed the servants, and her personality seemed to me to cling to every object.

"Were Mrs. Marlow and Dawson friendly, Norah?"

"Well, miss, they wasn't—not to say friends, for it's quarrel they did, day in and day out. It's meself that heard 'em many a time in this very room with the door shut and them thinkin' no one was near. Not that I heard what they said—they was careful enough about *that*, so they was—but just a word now and then, and voices angry-like or excited."

Norah paused for breath, and I seized the opportunity to ask a question:

"If they were enemies, Norah, would he know anything about her private affairs?"

The woman looked puzzled, hesitated, and finally said slowly:

"Well, miss, it's queer, to be sure. They weren't exactly enemies, for he looked after her comfort with a pretty sharp eye. It was her that was stand-offish and disagreeable, with never a pleasant word to throw to a dog, and not so much as a smile or a thank-you, no matter what he did for her. And yet——"

She lowered her voice and looked apprehensively around, as though expecting to see the housekeeper behind her.

"And yet, Miss Wayne, I'm sure that, in spite of all her high and mighty ways, Mrs. Marlow was *afraid* of Dawson."

"Nonsense, Norah," I said, briskly, for I was convinced the woman was merely trying to magnify her own importance in this crisis. "Don't let your imagination run away with you. Stick to facts."

Norah tossed her head indignantly.

"Sure, miss, facts is facts, and well I knows it. And what I'm sayin' is gospel truth, but if I'm not to be believed, I'll keep a still tongue in me head, so I will. But there's things I *could* tell you——"

Again the suggestive pause and expectant sidelong glance at me, and I found myself wondering whether the woman really had anything to tell me, after all. So I said in what I flattered myself was a very dignified and impressive manner:

"If there is anything I ought to know, Norah, anything that has any real bearing on the case, I think you had better tell me at once. Don't let us have any more mysterious hints, but come straight to the point. Now, what is it?"

Norah drew her chair closer to

mine, and spoke in a whisper, almost as though she feared the walls had ears.

"Well, miss, it's just this. Last night I didn't sleep well. There's something about the loneliness of this place that gets on my nerves, so it does, and only yesterday I gave Mrs. Marlow warning, for stay here I can't and won't—not for any wages in the world!"

I murmured an involuntary protest, for Norah was an artist in her own particular line, but she went on with her story unheeding.

"As I said, miss, I couldn't sleep. There were queer noises outside—voices, like—and I thought the wind in the pines would drive me crazy. I got to thinkin' about the rolls I'd set for breakfast, and wonderin' if they was covered up, and tried to make up my mind to come down and see. But what with them old pine trees sighin' and quaverin' outside, and the clocks gone wrong and strikin' crazy-like inside——"

"The clocks!" I interrupted. "What do you mean?"

I could not help a sudden thrill, for I remembered the night of our arrival at Stony-Lonesome, and Sylvia's frightened face and manner that night in my room.

Norah took up the thread of her story again.

"Yes, miss, the clocks was all wrong. Strikin' over and over again. Didn't you hear 'em? When I couldn't stand it no longer, I got up to go down and stop them, for I thought they'd be ruined. Maybe it was only one of them, but it sounded like both—I couldn't rightly tell. Anyhow, I started down, and when I got into the back hall on the landing I saw——"

"Well?"

"I saw Dawson standing at Mrs. Marlow's door, talking to her. He had his hand on her arm, and they

were both excited. Then they went down the stairs together. She hadn't been to bed at all, Miss Wayne. She was dressed just as she is now, poor soul, but Dawson—he didn't wear his butler's clothes. He had on white trousers and a dark coat."

I heard a voice I hardly recognized as my own asking a question: "Was the coat blue?"

"I—I—don't know, Miss Wayne. It was a dark coat. I could not say in the dim light whether it was blue or black."

"Have you told this to the coroner?"

"No, miss, not yet; but I will at the inquest. I didn't like Mrs. Marlow—she was that haughty and disagreeable there was no pleasing her—but she had as good a right to live as anybody, and so I'm goin' to up and tell what I know, and then——"

Norah stopped suddenly, her voice trailing off into inarticulate sounds and her usually ruddy face blanched and terrified.

Following the direction of her eyes, I instinctively turned toward the door. It had opened noiselessly, and on the threshold stood Dawson, smiling.

There was something in that smile that petrified me into silence, and I sat, like Norah, motionless and staring at the door. Only a moment the spell lasted, then the butler slipped into the room and addressed me in his usual respectful manner:

"I understood you wanted me, Miss Wayne."

I pulled myself together as well as I could, and tried to assume my customary manner, but my voice, even to my own ears, did not sound as crisp and decided as usual, when I answered him:

"I was making inquiries about Mrs. Marlow's friends and relations, Dawson. They should, of course, be notified of her death."

"Yes, Miss Wayne, certainly," agreed Dawson, and waited for more.

"Do you know where any of them are to be found?"

The man thought for a moment, then answered quietly and with apparent sincerity:

"No, Miss Wayne, I do not. You see, Mrs. Marlow has been here many years. She was very quiet and reserved about herself, and I know nothing more about her than I did when I came here, some five years ago. Possibly Colonel Gower may know something about her family. I understand she came here with them when the house was built."

He spoke convincingly, and I was compelled to believe him, yet there was something unnatural about him that puzzled me until I remembered his English accent, always conspicuous when he spoke, and which Polly insisted even flavored the after-dinner coffee he passed us. To-day Dawson's aspirates were in their proper places, and his manner lacked the pompous dignity that was so impressive. In short, it was a man and not a butler to whom I was speaking, and a man I did not know.

I was about to send him away and consider what to do next when I happened to glance at the cook, who still sat in Mrs. Marlow's chair by the window. On Norah's face was the same frightened look, and her eyes had the terrified fascination of a rabbit confronted by the snake that will presently swallow it. She was gazing directly at Dawson, who stood looking at her, his eyes narrowed to little slits, and his lips wearing the smile they had worn when I first noticed him in the doorway. It was a sinister smile, and my own heart contracted as I suddenly remembered that we were very far away from anybody we knew, and that I was responsible to John

and Mary for the safety and well-being of their girls.

Then Dawson turned toward me with the deferential, respectful manner to which I was accustomed.

"Is there anything more, Miss Wayne?"

I was quite willing to assure him I wanted nothing more, and he quietly withdrew, closing the door after him. Norah immediately relaxed her tense attitude, and the color gradually returned to her face.

"Do you think he heard me, miss?" she whispered. "Sure and he gave me a wicked look! It made cold shivers run down me spine, so it did. But Norah O'Brien's a match for him or any other man, and so I'll show him when the time comes. Will you be having dinner as usual, miss? Mrs. Marlow ordered everything for to-day last night. She was always a day ahead with her orders, and carried out to the letter they must be or there was trouble in the kitchen. The poor soul! And her dead and gone!"

Norah unwillingly retired at last, garrulous to the end, and I went up to my own room, where I could compose myself and bring order out of the chaos of my mind. For I was seriously concerned over what I had just heard, and more than half inclined to send for the coroner and tell him all I knew or suspected.

But a certain latent superiority in Dr. Brownley's manner had privately irritated me, and helped me determine to let him conduct the inquest unhampered by any hints of mine. I do not intend to say this was a proper stand to take, under the circumstances, but I finally determined to do what a woman is popularly supposed to be incapable of doing—keep silent.

But the next day I deeply regretted having held my tongue, which merely proves that the natural in-

stinct of a woman to be communicative is not to be lightly disregarded. If I had told Dr. Brownley everything I knew that night, perhaps Norah—but I am getting ahead of my story, and I always believe in relating things just as they happen or not at all. Any other way is like putting in the basting threads after the garment is finished.

CHAPTER VII

I was glad when the day of Mrs. Marlow's death drew to a close, and when twilight approached I went downstairs to look up the girls, for I had a feeling that I would like to have them near me before dark.

I found the twins on the veranda, looking over the ocean, and rather out of sorts and inclined to hold themselves aloof. Judicious questioning revealed the fact that the older girls had gone out and declined their society.

"But," I said, rather puzzled by this information, "where did they go? Isabel is not very well—I left her in her room lying on her couch."

Dolly sniffed indignantly.

"Well, she isn't lying down now, Aunt Clara. She's strolling by the sad sea waves, with her white sweater on, and something inside it that made it bulge out at the back. And she was cross enough to bite nails."

Polly here put in a word:

"If there had been anybody under the sun for her to meet, I should say Isabel had a *date*. She acted just that way, didn't she, Johnny?"

"But where did they go?" I inquired. "And why didn't Sylvia—"

Again Dolly sniffed contemptuously.

"Sylvia didn't have time to say anything, Aunt Clara. She's gone motoring."

"Motoring?"

"In the runabout, Aunt Clara,

with no room for anybody but herself. I call that selfish, don't you?"

I had instant visions of accidents, and Sylvia's mangled form brought home on a stretcher.

"Where is Davis?" I said. "Send him after her at once. I'm surprised at Sylvia! She knows I do not wish her to drive alone."

"Don't get excited, Aunt Clara," returned Polly. "Sylvia's all right—she took Davis with her, of course. But it *was* piggish in her to go off that way, just when we were planning for a ride."

My mind relieved about Sylvia, I thought at once of Isabel.

"Don't you girls want to run down the beach," I suggested, "find Isabel, and bring her home for a cup of tea on the veranda? Don't you think that would be nice?"

But the twins were not enthusiastic, and finally flatly declined the proposition, Dolly declaring that she thanked Heaven she knew enough not to go where she was not wanted. So I said with dignity that, although I was very tired, I would go myself, since no one was willing to oblige me, and I walked away with my head held high and disapproval in every feature. But I had reason to think the girls were not sufficiently impressed, for I heard Polly giggle and remark that sometimes Aunt Clara was just too funny for anything.

Somewhat nettled, I started down the beach after Isabel. Evidently she had walked close to the water's edge, for the tide was going out, and I could see her footsteps in the firm, wet sand.

I went around the point where the beach projected abruptly into the sea, past the little bath-house built for the men of the Gower family, on down the beach and following the irregular tracks in the sand. Suddenly I paused, rubbed my eyes, and

looked more closely. Was I seeing double? Surely there were four footprints instead of the two I had at first noticed.

On down the beach they went, four straggling tracks—two small and two much larger. So much larger, in fact, that I knew no woman's foot had made them. Polly's words about "a date" occurred to me. Whom had Isabel come out to meet?

For some distance I followed the double line of footprints, pondering deeply and oppressed with gloomy forebodings that would not be reasoned into the background, try as I would. I tried my best, for I trusted Isabel and depended on her more than I realized, but there was something in the firm and decided print of the large boot leading away from me that made me apprehensive for the smaller one beside it.

Then, suddenly, the footprints ceased. They did not wander off into the mainland and lose themselves there, or lead down into the water. They simply *stopped*. I got down on my knees and examined the ground, but, although I put on my glasses, the sand shone smooth and untouched beneath my scrutiny. In one place I thought I saw a faint mark, such as might be made by the toe of a boot, but I was not sure. The outline was so faint and indistinct that it really might have been anything, and was probably nothing, and, look as carefully as I might, I could find nothing else.

So after a while I scrambled to my feet in a dazed sort of way, and stood looking vaguely into space, almost as though I expected Isabel to appear in the clouds above me, or rise out of the sea like a modern mermaid.

At my right the ocean rippled, little lines of white froth marking the receding tide; on my left the pine

trees formed a dark background; while before and behind me was an endless stretch of shining sand.

If I kept on walking, I might in time reach Stephen Gower's bungalow—I knew of no other house along the beach, and it was empty except for his Japanese cook. If I retraced my steps, I should soon be at Stony-Lonesome, where I should probably find Isabel with the other girls, all anxious for tea, and all talking at once, as usual.

I decided to go home, and felt that I could not get there quickly enough, so, instead of retracing my steps around the point, I determined to take a short cut through the pines and across the mainland, which would bring me to the front of the house.

The sun had set, and it was dark among the pines, where the shade was dense at midday, so I was very glad indeed to see a bit of road, and know that I was actually in the grounds and would soon be home.

Coming round a turn of the driveway, I saw a vehicle I recognized as the runabout from the Stony-Lonesome garage standing quietly in the center of the road, with its top down and its occupants plainly visible. I could see Sylvia's white hat, and the outline of Davis's chauffeur's cap, but they were rather too close together to suit my ideas of the fitness of things, and I thought I could see a dark arm extended across the back of the seat against which Sylvia leaned, but of this I was not sure.

I stood an instant gazing with unbelieving eyes, then the hats separated, and Davis jumped into the groom's seat at the back, where he assumed the proper erect position and waited for Sylvia to drive off. But the car evidently refused to start, for he was obliged to get down and crank it, and it was when he was doing this that he glanced up and

saw me. I will do him the justice to say that he was embarrassed as well as surprised, and he touched his cap with a guilty air as I approached. Sylvia, however, although plainly surprised, was quite equal to the situation.

"Get right in and ride home, Aunt Clara," she said. "Were you taking a walk? How fortunate we happened to get stuck just here, wasn't it? Something went wrong with the steering-gear, and Davis was showing me what to do with it, but now it's all right."

I made a short reply, and relapsed into silence, hoping in this way to express my disapproval. Sylvia, too, made no further attempt at conversation, and we went swiftly home in silence, with Davis sitting behind us like a graven image, with folded arms and expressionless face. I determined that as soon as we got home I would speak seriously to Sylvia and entreat her to remember that while a chauffeur is invaluable in his proper place, he must remain to her simply a part of the running machinery of the car, otherwise there should be no more motoring, unless I went along as supercargo.

But when I got home I forgot all about it, for Isabel had not returned, and the fear that had shadowed me on the beach gripped again at my heart.

Dinner time came and passed, and still she did not come. Evening slipped away into night, and I sat with the three girls who were left, frightened and helpless, waiting for the step that did not come, and listening for the voice that did not speak.

Dawson had taken one of the gardener's men and gone to search the beach, while I had sent Davis into the village to get what news and assistance he could. Meanwhile, we sat together and told one another

that everything was all right and there was no reason to be worried.

But every time the wind blew hard enough to rattle the windows, or the boom of the surf was especially loud and insistent, we looked furtively at one another and spoke of other things. We lingered long beside the fire, too, and finally all went to my room together, deciding that we did not want to be separated just then.

The night wore slowly on. Davis returned from the village, reporting no news, and started out again to search among the pine trees. Dawson also came back unsuccessful, and asked me if it would not be advisable for him to take a motor-boat and search the beach again, *since the tide was now coming in*—a sinister suggestion that made my blood turn to ice in my veins.

After a while the twins fell asleep, but Sylvia came and sat on the floor beside me, her head against my knee, and together we watched the moonlight on the water. We saw the motor-boat with Dawson shoot out from the shadow beneath us into the silvery path of light beyond, and from the little involuntary shiver Sylvia gave I knew we had the same thought, although we could not put it into words.

"Aunt Clara," whispered Sylvia, at last, "I wish we had never seen this place."

I wished so, too, from the bottom of my heart, but I did not say so, and Sylvia continued:

"It has been very jolly, living out of doors, boating and motoring and everything. But often at night I've been afraid. I don't know why exactly—perhaps it's because we are so far away from everything, and then, Aunt Clara——"

"Yes, Sylvia."

"Don't you think it's strange the way the village people shun us? Oh, yes, they *do*—I've noticed it all

along. When we go into town, they just look at us and say something to each other and pass on. There must be some nice people there, and the Gowers ought to know them. And if they *did*, we should have known them, too, by this time. As it is, no one comes near this place any more than they would if we had smallpox. And there must be a reason for it."

In my heart I agreed with her, for I, too, had wondered much at the utter seclusion of Stony-Lonesome, but I said to Sylvia that the Gowers were city people and went away in the winter. Probably they had not encouraged friendly overtures, and the people naturally resented it.

Sylvia shook her head doubtfully, but did not renew the subject. Instead, she spoke of Mrs. Marlow's death, and the fear that was now almost a certainty that it was not accidental.

"It's all so dreadful, Aunt Clara. That poor woman! And now Isabel——"

Sylvia's voice broke, and she hid her face in my lap.

"If Isabel does not come back in the morning, what shall we do? Must we cable to father and mother?"

It was the question I had been asking myself, and which I had not been able to answer. I knew John was getting better every day and nothing but vital necessity would make me bring them back. Still, if Isabel did not come home——"

"We shall wait till morning, dear, before we think about that," I told Sylvia. "She will surely come."

After a while Sylvia ceased talking and the tenseness of her attitude relaxed. Her breath came and went regularly, and she slept quietly, her head against my knees and the moonlight touching her fair hair.

I sat alert and watchful until just

before sunrise, when at last a feeling of utter lassitude stole over me, and, resting my head against the back of my chair, I, too, slept soundly.

I woke with a start, to find the room flooded with sunshine, and the girls whispering together at the door.

CHAPTER VIII

I do not think I was surprised when they told me that Norah, the cook, was missing. In fact, had I been informed that the entire establishment had vanished into thin air, and that Stony-Lonesome and everything pertaining to it were merely figments of the imagination, I should have believed it, so unreal were the last few days to my newly-wakened consciousness. Then my brain suddenly began to work, memory rushed upon me, enveloping me in its unwelcome embrace, and I knew I was not dreaming.

"She's gone," Sylvia kept repeating, "gone in the night. And her clothes are all here, even her hat, so she couldn't have intended to go away. Oh, Aunt Clara, what does it mean?"

The twins, round-eyed and for once silent, clutched each other nervously, and I myself involuntarily jumped as someone knocked at the door, almost as though it was Norah's ghost craving admission.

But it was only Dawson, to say that his search of the beach was in vain, and to report the disappearance of the cook. Dawson was as immaculately dressed as usual, but his eyes had the strained and heavy expression of one who has not slept, and his manner was preoccupied.

Questioned as to his opinion concerning Norah's vanishing so strangely, he could only shake his head and admit himself puzzled. After a moment's hesitation, he added:

"You know, Miss Wayne, Norah did not like me. I hope it is not necessary for me to say her prejudice was unjust."

I knew at once what he meant, and wondered how long he had stood at Mrs. Marlow's door, listening, while Norah O'Brien talked to me. I recalled, too, the terrified expression in her eyes, and Dawson's smile as he stood watching her, but I heard myself saying vaguely:

"Why, of course, Dawson."

"Thank you, Miss Wayne," he returned. "Breakfast will be served as usual, when you are ready."

"Aunt Clara," exclaimed Dolly, after Dawson withdrew, "he *made* you say that—yes, he did. He fixed his eyes on you and hypnotized you until you said just what he wanted you to say. Didn't he, Johnny?"

Polly nodded emphatically.

"He sure did. But I don't blame you, Aunt Clara, for I'd have said it, too, if he had looked at me that way. I wish Dawson had disappeared instead of Norah. I wish Isabel would come back, and I wish we had never seen this place. I want to go home."

Sylvia said nothing, but her eyes filled with tears, and, fearing a general collapse and tears from all of us, I hurriedly suggested breakfast and probable good news by mail. The latter suggestion cheered the girls immensely, and was immediately adopted by the twins as a certainty instead of a remote possibility.

After breakfast, I sent for the coroner and told him everything. Dr. Brownley listened very gravely. He had heard of Isabel's disappearance, and also of Norah's, and did not hesitate to say I had acted most unwisely in not telling him at once. He assured me that every effort was being made to ascertain Isabel's whereabouts, and that he hoped she would soon be restored to us.

"At the same time, Miss Wayne," he added, "I think it only right to tell you that this promises to be a very strange case, and in my opinion we will need more expert knowledge than our village can produce before we are done with it. There have been all sorts of rumors about this house for some years, but nothing definite enough to warrant the intrusion of the police."

Dr. Brownley was a benevolent-looking little man, with white mutton-chop whiskers and a hurried manner, as though he must make an important appointment and was already late. He had a habit of sitting suddenly upright when interested, and working the end of his nose inquisitively, and at such times one involuntarily thought of a white rabbit. He did this now, leaning forward and speaking confidentially.

"Miss Wayne, how did you happen to come here? Do you know Colonel Gower personally?"

I was about to reply frankly, when something in the suppressed eagerness of Dr. Brownley's manner checked me. I have always made it a point not to gratify curiosity about my private affairs, and Dr. Brownley's expectant attitude irritated me, in spite of the serious matter we were discussing. He seemed to quiver with curiosity, from his mutton-chop whiskers to the toes of his little boots, as he sat on the extreme edge of a large chair, looking up into my face.

Consequently, I merely said in my most reserved and dignified manner that Colonel Gower was a friend of my brother, who was traveling abroad this summer. Now, I flatter myself I can be extremely chilling when I choose, but to-day my frigidity had no effect. Dr. Brownley merely edged a little closer and smiled genially.

"But you, yourself, Miss Wayne

—what is your opinion of Colonel Gower? A lady's intuition, you know, is always to be trusted, and with your intelligence and discernment you could not be mistaken."

"I have not the pleasure of knowing Colonel Gower personally," I answered firmly; "but I have never found my brother's judgment at fault when selecting his friends."

I felt this much was due to John, although it was not strictly true. I should trust my own judgment in preference to his any day.

"Quite so," agreed Dr. Brownley. "Very natural, I am sure. And your brother, of course, knows Colonel Gower well. A friend of long standing, I think you said?"

Now, I had not said anything of the kind, and my indignation rose afresh. What right had he to question me about our private affairs? I was not yet on the witness stand.

"I am not able to inform you of the exact date that my brother met Colonel Gower," I said frostily. "In fact, I have never before felt the necessity for such definite statistics."

The little man actually blushed.

"Miss Wayne," he said, "I trust you will pardon my apparently impertinent curiosity, but the truth is, we tried very hard yesterday to locate Colonel Gower, but without success. We cannot find any of the family, and——"

"Mr. Stephen Gower," announced Dawson, with fine dramatic effect.

We gazed at him in silent bewilderment as he crossed the room, for it really did seem as if he had dropped from the clouds, and it was an instant or so before I could collect my scattered senses and greet him politely.

Stephen Gower looked tired and anxious, but he was as immaculate as usual, with none of the dust of travel about him to indicate a hasty journey or recent arrival.

"I have been yachting with friends, Miss Wayne," he said, "and your message did not reach me until last night. Otherwise, I should, of course, have come at once. This gentleman is Dr. Brownley, I believe?"

"Your arrival is very opportune, Mr. Gower," remarked Dr. Brownley. "There is much to discuss with you."

But Stephen showed no desire for discussion. Ignoring the little doctor in much the same way as a St. Bernard scorns a white poodle, he turned quietly to me.

"When you are at liberty, Miss Wayne, I am at your service. You will find me in the library."

I lost no time in following him, leaving Dr. Brownley sitting on the extreme edge of his chair, with the end of his nose quivering excitedly, yet without sufficient courage to follow me.

As I looked at Stephen Gower standing by the library window, a suspicion I had cherished in the recesses of my heart became a conviction, and I knew, too, that I was, for some inexplicable reason, sorry for him. And a little afraid for myself. He was very good to look at, as he stood there gazing out at the ocean, but his face was careworn and seemed much older than when I had last seen him, with heavy lines about the mouth, and dark shadows underneath the eyes that did not meet mine squarely. The unnamed fear that had been with me ever since I saw the footprints in the sand clutched sharply at my heart, but I tried to keep my voice steady and my manner unchanged as I spoke his name and approached him. Motioning away the chair he offered me, I went directly to the point, as it is my invariable habit to do.

"What have you done with Isabel?" I demanded. "Where is she?"

He did not lie to me, nor did he attempt to hedge, as a weaker man might have done. But the eyes that had looked everywhere but at me met mine suddenly and held me gazing at him for an instant's breathless silence.

"I cannot tell you," he said slowly.

I sank into the chair I had declined a moment before, for my knees refused to support me, and quite suddenly, in an impotent, womanish manner, began to cry. I have no excuse to offer for this weakness which is a thing I have always condemned in my own sex. I only know that for the life of me I could not have helped it.

Then Stephen Gower did a curious thing. He crossed the room, closed and locked the heavy double doors leading into the hall, and also the door opening on the veranda. Then he seated himself in a chair facing me, put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a small revolver, which he laid on the table within easy reach. Now, there is something about a gun of any kind that has always had a paralyzing effect upon me—they are so mysteriously innocent-looking and so unexpected in results—so when this one appeared unexpectedly I felt as though I were already dead, and wondered how the girls would get along by themselves.

After an instant, during which I sat with tightly closed eyes awaiting the end, I heard my own name, and unwillingly looked up, surprised to find myself alive, after all.

"Don't be frightened," he said gently, and the eyes that looked at me were certainly not murderous.

"Take it away," I gasped, pointing to the pistol.

But Stephen Gower shook his head.

"Not yet," he said. "I may need it. I may as well explain at once, Miss Wayne, that I will use this only

in case you want to leave the room before we finish our little talk, or attempt to touch the bell. But I'm quite sure you will not be so foolish."

I was sure of it also, although I said nothing; I merely cringed as far back in my chair as possible, and was entirely ready to do whatever I was told. This is a mortifying admission, but a true one, and I wonder how many women in my place would have done otherwise.

"Now we can talk comfortably," he said.

It was not exactly my idea of comfort, but I was afraid to say so. I merely ventured to change my position, and waited for more.

"In the first place," he resumed, "I want to assure you that Isabel is well and perfectly safe. No harm of any kind has happened or will happen to her. You believe this, don't you, Miss Wayne?"

I certainly did not believe it, but I said nothing.

"I am sorry," he continued, "and I understand just how you feel toward me. Indeed, Miss Wayne, I am very deeply sorry for—everything."

Taking my courage in both hands, I faced him with as much dignity as I could muster, but my voice shook in a most annoying manner and sounded deplorably weak when I hoped to hear it firmest.

"Stephen Gower," I said, "what do you mean by this extraordinary conduct? What have you done with my niece? I insist that you take me to her at once."

"I shall be very glad to do so," was his astonishing reply. "In fact, that is chiefly why I am here to-day. But first, Miss Wayne, may I inquire whether you have repeated to any one what Isabel told you concerning my interview with Mrs. Marlow on the beach?"

I hesitated an instant, and immediately his fingers toyed carelessly with the pistol.

"Please be entirely frank, Miss Wayne."

I told him I had that morning confided in Dr. Brownley, but in no one else, and he immediately touched the bell and unlocked the door into the hall.

"Dawson," he said, when the butler appeared, "I wish to speak to Dr. Brownley. Do not let him go away until I am at liberty."

I am entirely aware that what I am going to say is beyond the bounds of probability. Even now, as I look back upon it, I can scarcely believe that it really happened. But it *did*, and I even remember the exact words we used, and the way the sun filtered through the leaded window-panes, forming fantastic patterns on the floor at my feet. What Stephen Gower said was entirely commonplace and matter-of-fact, but what he did was curious.

He deliberately folded back the rug before the writing-table, replaced the chair on the bare floor, and remarked that he believed I should find it more comfortable than the chair I then occupied. Of course I made the change. I had begun to think he was a dangerous lunatic, and had he suggested I sit on the ebony pedestal that held the marble bust of Schiller, I should have done so at once.

"Now," he continued, handing me a pen, "please write what I say exactly as I say it."

This is the letter he dictated, and I wrote without a word of protest, sitting quietly at the desk, with the electric bell in full sight but quite out of reach. I have often wondered whether had the bell been within reach of my hand I should have had the courage to touch it. I like to believe that I should have pressed it

firmly, looking steadfastly at him as I did so but this is a question that must remain undecided.

MY DEAR SYLVIA:

You will be glad to know that I have heard from Isabel, and find it advisable to join her immediately. She is quite well and happy, so you need feel no further alarm on her account. I expect to bring her back with me when I come, but it is very probable we may be away several days—perhaps longer. It is not possible for me to give you an address just now, but you must feel no anxiety whatever about anything. Do the best you can without me, and, above all, do not worry about anything or send any word to your parents. Have all further search for Isabel stopped immediately, and remember I have gone away for a few days of my own free will and wish no publicity given to my movements.

With love to you all, and hoping you will amuse yourselves and not be lonely,

Affectionately,

AUNT CLARA.

He read it, and nodded approvingly.

"This ought to prevent any excitement, and I will see that she gets it, although I don't think I shall deliver it in person. Now, Miss Wayne, just a moment, and the worst will be over. Sit perfectly still and don't be afraid."

He put his foot on a panel in the floor close to the desk, pressed steadily upon it, then slowly, almost imperceptibly, I felt myself sinking. I thought at first that I was fainting, as I had heard this act was accompanied by a sinking sensation, and involuntarily closed my eyes, only to open them in a moment to the agonized realization that the chair in which I sat, as well as my own especial part of the floor, was, indeed, slowly descending into a dark abyss.

It is no exaggeration to say that I was paralyzed with fright. I tried to scream, but could not make a sound, and I felt my breath coming in little gasps as I went down. Presently my

head was on a level with the library floor, and I could only see the desk, and Stephen's face as he leaned forward.

"Have courage, Miss Wayne," he remarked sympathetically. "The worst is nearly over, and I assure you there is no danger if you sit still."

I have read somewhere that in a few minutes immediately before execution, the criminal's entire past flashes through his mind. Just how this is known is not explained, for usually those who pass into the Great Beyond do not return to analyze the emotions caused by the passing, but such is the accepted theory.

Now, I was perfectly sure I was about to meet my doom, but the only emotion I seem to remember was a feeling of surprise that Stephen Gower's eyes, looking down into mine, were not gray, as I had supposed, but the blue of violets, and wonderfully expressive.

I went down into the darkness, and on down until only a small patch of light marked the library floor and the sun-bathed world without. This patch grew smaller, and at last I closed my eyes to shut out the enveloping darkness and grasped the arms of my chair convulsively.

There was a bump and slight shock, as though an elevator had reached terra firma, and I opened my eyes to see a light, which I afterward learned was made by an electric torch, and the figure of a man that somehow seemed familiar to me.

"This way, please, Miss Wayne."

It was Dawson's voice, and the hand put out to help me was flesh and blood, and not in the least ghostly or unreal, but I felt as though it would vanish if I touched it. But it did nothing of the kind; it merely grasped mine firmly and helped me down from my chair with the respectful care he always exercised.

Pressing the electric torch into my hand, he pointed down the passage behind him.

"Keep straight ahead, Miss Wayne, until you come to a door. Open it, and you will find a room where you will be fairly comfortable for a little while. Mr. Gower will communicate with you before long."

And then, if you will believe me, while I stood there staring at him like a speechless fool, Dawson stepped into the chair I had just vacated, pressed a button on the wall beside him, and began the ascent toward the little patch of light above.

CHAPTER IX

I clutched the torch, and watched the ascent of Dawson until the disappearance of the faint light above told me that the library floor was again in its proper place. Then I turned mechanically in the direction he had indicated and examined my surroundings.

I seemed to be in a sort of corridor, with walls of rough stone, and a floor of boards that shook unpleasantly when I stepped on them. I was afraid to stay there, and equally afraid to go on, but finally the thought that perhaps I might find Isabel behind the closed door nerved me to advance. I moved very slowly and cautiously, and at every step expected the earth to open and swallow me, but the thought of Isabel sustained me, and gave me courage to open the door when I finally reached it, although I could feel my heart thumping.

A flood of light dazzled me for a moment, then I saw a small room, cozy and inviting-looking, with rugs, easy-chairs, and a table with books and magazines, while plenty of softly-shaded electric lights gave an almost home-like effect. Some one was seated at the other side of the table, and my heart throbbed expect-

antly as I stepped across the thresh-old. It was not Isabel, however, who came forward to greet me, but Dr. Brownley, and I sank weakly into the nearest chair, quite faint with emotion and disappointment.

It was a very irate little man who stood before me. His round face was almost purple, and even his hair stood indignantly erect, while each whisker seemed to bristle with indignation.

"Madame," he sputtered, "I should like to know what you mean by this remarkable conduct."

Every bit of outraged dignity I possessed rose within me at this unjust speech. Here was an adversary I could meet on at least equal ground. So I turned on the little doctor and attempted to wither him with a look, as I said, with something like a return to my own manner:

"And I should like to know, sir, what you mean by addressing me in this way?"

At this Dr. Brownley, as Dolly would have said, went up in the air. He actually shook his fist under my very nose, as he shouted:

"What do I mean, madam? I mean to find out what *you* mean by this outrageous indignity. That's what I mean! And what *do* you mean by it? Come, now!"

He stood before me nodding like an infuriated mandarin, and repeating at intervals:

"And what *do* you mean by it, I should like to know, madam? Come, now, what *do* you mean?"

I did not mean anything, and I tried to say so, but Dr. Brownley was beyond hearing anything in an ordinary tone of voice, and continued to gesticulate and splutter until I lost every remnant of patience I possessed. And it is a curious thing, but just in proportion as my anger increased my strength returned, and

my knees ceased to tremble. I felt almost myself again, and entirely equal to meeting Dr. Brownley on his own ground.

"Be quiet," I said sharply, and for very surprise he stopped an instant.

I pointed to a chair, and commanded, rather than requested, him to sit down.

"Now," I said, when he had complied, "let us talk this thing over quietly. I don't know why you are here, for I had nothing whatever to do with it. I don't know why *I* am here, either, though I am perfectly well aware why I came. What brought *you* here, Dr. Brownley?"

He jumped from his chair in much the same manner a jack-in-the-box bobs up in your face when the cover is raised.

"What brought me here?" he repeated. "Your servant, madam, by your orders. *That's* what brought me here."

"Nothing of the sort," I snapped. "A likely thing, indeed, that I should meet you secretly in a room under the house, when I didn't even know there was such a place."

"Don't equivocate, madam, don't equivocate," he blustered. "Can you deny that you sent your butler after me, and that he brought me to this—this *cavern*? And part of the way at the point of a pistol, by Jove!"

"I certainly can, and *do*," I retorted. "You seem to have lost your senses. Speak lucidly, sir, or not at all. Your manner is most objectionable."

"Lucidly!" he shouted. "Only hear the woman! She confines me in a dungeon underneath the house, when they are waiting for me to conduct an inquest on a murdered woman, and then tells me to speak lucidly! Ye gods!"

Well, there is no use in repeating all that Dr. Brownley and I said

to each other, for we talked at cross-purposes and grew angrier at every word we uttered, but at last we managed to get down to facts. Shorn of its indignant expletives and unnecessary verbiage, Dr. Brownley's statement was as follows:

He was quietly sitting, waiting for me to finish my interview with Stephen Gower, when Dawson appeared with a message purporting to come from me, requesting him to join me at once, as I had something important to say. Dawson volunteered the information that a clue to Norah's whereabouts had been discovered, and counselled haste, and Dr. Brownley naturally followed him willingly.

They went around the house, and down the stone steps where Mrs. Marlow met her death, and into the boat-house at the foot of them. Once safely inside, Dawson's manner changed. He closed the door, and they were left in utter darkness. Dr. Brownley turned to speak to Dawson, and to his horror felt the cold muzzle of a revolver against his head. A voice he hardly recognized as the butler's deferential tone commanded him to say nothing and walk straight ahead. And Dr. Brownley had walked as straight as possible.

"That is all I know, madam," he concluded. "I was brought to this apartment and left here—led, by Jove, like a lamb to the slaughter! Then after a while you appear—against your will, I am forced to believe—brought here like—like another lamb."

"What shall we do?" I said, in helpless appeal.

"It is my belief," Dr. Brownley said with conviction—"it is my firm belief that more foul play is intended, and this time we are the innocent victims. We shall probably be left in this cavern until we starve to death. A very slow and lingering death is

starvation! I should not be surprised, Miss Wayne, if you outlived me, for thin, scrawny women are often tough and wiry."

I sat erect and glared at Dr. Brownley, but he was evidently innocent of intentional offense, and concerned solely with the miserable fate he anticipated for himself. And I, too, was apprehensive of the worst, although at the bottom of my heart I cherished a conviction that Stephen Gower had not lowered me into that black abyss to die of starvation.

Dr. Brownley and I searched in vain for any way of exit. The door through which he had entered with Dawson was securely locked, and though we penetrated the dark passageway through which I had come, no amount of pressing the button brought down a portion of the library floor to us.

So we returned to the little room, and sat down miserably in the comfortable chairs to await our fate. And while we waited Dr. Brownley told all he knew about Stony-Lonesome, which was little enough.

He said the Gowers had always held themselves aloof from the villagers, and were disliked in consequence. That recently strange rumors had been floating around concerning Colonel Gower, and very curious things had happened at Stony-Lonesome, and that he had heard the house was now watched by the Secret Service, but of this he was not sure. Questioned about Mrs. Gower, he merely shook his head. She never went into the village, and no one, so far as he knew, had ever seen her. The daughter at first came occasionally with her husband, "a weak-looking chap," but had not been there for a long time, and Colonel Gower and his son Stephen were frequently seen even after the house was closed and the family

reported abroad. Our arrival had puzzled and excited the village, and they had looked askance at us from the first.

"Although," admitted Dr. Brownley generously, "you were not exactly the usual type of hardened criminal."

So the hours dragged slowly along, until it seemed we had lived several lives, and discussed everything we knew, from the night of our arrival until the death of Mrs. Marlow, many hundred times. And when at last a key clicked in the lock of the door I with difficulty suppressed a scream, so certain was I that the time had come for us to die.

It was Dawson, with a lighted lantern in one hand and a sinister-looking pistol in the other. In a very business-like and direct manner, he invited us to precede him down the passageway.

We marched along in silence for what seemed to me a long way, and then I heard the boom of the surf, and a horrible thought occurred to me.

"Dawson," I faltered, "have you brought us here to drown us?"

"No, madam," he returned; "I have not."

There was not a trace of English accent in his voice, nor was his manner that of a servant, as he stooped and freed my skirt from the rough wall where it had caught.

I could hear the water plainly now, and a streak of pale light told me I was nearing the end of the tunnel. It was moonlight and not sunlight that greeted us as we mounted a few steps and found ourselves upon a sort of floating dock. It was narrow and wobbly, and as I walked along it I wished I had never been born. At the end I paused and mechanically grasped a hand I found outstretched to help me.

"This way, Miss Wayne," said

Stephen Gower's voice. "Just a little while longer, and you will be safe and comfortable again."

Safe and comfortable! I gave an involuntary gasp of fright, and clutched his hand tightly as he assisted me into a small boat that rocked most unpleasantly. Dr. Brownley came next, making strange sounds between choking and snorting, which I took to be signs of suppressed indignation, and to which no attention was paid. Dawson followed, and we chugged away in a motor-boat, towing our dock behind us.

I don't know where we went, nor how far, but it seemed to me we must be in mid-Atlantic, when I realized that we were approaching a vessel of some kind, that carried no lights, but loomed dark and threatening in the moonlight. I knew afterward that it was a seagoing steam yacht, but at the time I believed it to be a battleship, and as I clambered wearily up the ladder at its side I should not have been surprised to find the President and his entire cabinet assembled to greet me.

But instead, two eager arms were thrown about me as I tottered out on the deck, and Isabel's voice exclaimed between tears and laughter:

"Oh, Aunt Clara, Aunt Clara, you poor dear! Come down to my cabin, and let me tell you all about it."

CHAPTER X

I had often been tired in my life, and I had heard of the nervous reaction that follows sudden relief from great mental strain, but never before had I experienced the bodily fatigue or the numb feeling in my head with which I accompanied Isabel to her cabin. A woman, sitting sewing, rose as I entered and greeted me respectfully, but I gazed at her with uncomprehending eyes.

"It's Norah," explained Isabel, "Norah O'Brien, you know—the

cook at Stony-Lonesome. You need not wait, Norah. I'll help Aunt Clara get to bed—she is all tired out."

And help me she did, with many sympathetic words and occasional tender little kisses. When I was safely deposited in my berth, she rang a bell, and almost immediately a steward appeared with an appetizing little dinner. Not until then did I realize that I had eaten nothing since breakfast, and was faint from need of food as well as conflicting emotions.

And Isabel fed me, sitting on the side of my berth, with glowing cheeks and eyes like stars.

"It's all so romantic, Aunt Clara," she said. "Dreadful, of course, but so interesting. And nothing very bad is going to happen to us, you know. We'll just land somewhere—Canada or the other side—and take a train or steamer to New York."

"You see," continued Isabel, "it just *had* to be. I mean our disappearance, mine and Norah's, and now yours and Dr. Brownley's. Stephen—I mean Mr. Gower—explained it all so nicely to me last night. I don't know much about business, but I can quite understand how a man don't want his invention made public property until it is perfected. Can't you, Aunt Clara? And Mrs. Marlow's death was *so* unfortunate at this time."

Isabel chatted on while I ate and drank silently, watching her dully. My head had begun to throb painfully, and, try as I would, I could not concentrate my mind on what she was saying.

"I'll take away your tray, Aunt Clara," she said at last, "and then when I come back we'll talk some more."

Isabel did not return immediately, and I felt my eyelids closing, in spite of strenuous efforts to keep them

open. The mingled emotions of the day had been too much for me, and I went to sleep just when I had every intention of getting up and dressing, and commanding Stephen Gower to take me back at once to Stony-Lonesome.

It must have been some hours later when I woke suddenly. The cabin was quite dark, except for the ray of moonlight that shone beneath the drawn blind of the little window opposite my berth, and at first I did not realize where I was. Then memory rushed upon me, and I knew I was somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean, and that Isabel was with me. Involuntarily, I looked around for her, but quiet breathing in the berth above convinced me that she was near. I wanted to see her, however, and be sure she had not vanished again, before I tried to go to sleep once more; so I crossed the little cabin and raised the blind, letting in a flood of light that made everything clearly visible.

Isabel was sleeping peacefully, with her dark hair, braided Indian fashion, falling over her pillow. One braid was just as usual, but I could see that from the end of the other a thick lock had been cut, leaving it ragged and uneven. Her face looked very innocent and lovely in the soft light, with the dark, curved lashes resting on her flushed cheeks. One hand was beneath her head, but the other was outside the coverlet, and I noticed on her finger a ring I had never seen before. It was a man's ring, of curiously wrought gold, set with emeralds, and looked strangely heavy and out of place on the girlish hand. Isabel stirred in her sleep.

"Stephen," she muttered, "you know I love you, dear, and trust you, but I can't always understand the things you do."

A real mother might have known

what to do under the circumstances, but only a maiden aunt who is trying to be motherly can understand how I felt as I heard these words. They banished every lingering desire for sleep, and brought fresh terrors to my mind. What was I to do?

Isabel, the dependable—the only one of the girls to whom I had felt I could turn for advice or assistance in emergencies, and Stephen Gower, the man I had good reason to believe was evading the law!

I sat down weakly in the easy-chair by the window to think it over, and a vision of her mother's horrified face rose before me.

Footsteps approached on the deck outside the window, and instinctively I lowered the blind.

"Do you persist in this piece of sentiment which, though creditable to your natural instinct, will probably be our ruin?"

"I certainly do."

"Then you are a bigger fool than I thought you."

The voices I believed were Dawson's and Stephen Gower's, though they spoke so low and hurriedly I could not be sure. Leaning back in my chair, I listened eagerly, shamelessly eavesdropping, with the hope that I might hear something that would be of use to me. They had paused, and were evidently leaning over the deck rail near the window.

"Come, Steve, be sensible," resumed the older man, with a very evident note of anxiety in his voice. "Your presence at the funeral can do her no good, and it might and probably will be our undoing."

"Nevertheless, I am going." He paused an instant and then resumed bitterly: "What have any of us ever done for her, except to cause her sorrow and bring trouble upon her? When have we listened to her tears and entreaties? What kind of life has she led among us all, and to

what did we bring her at last? You who promised to love and cherish her, and I——"

He paused abruptly. I heard a match strike, and as a little time elapsed before Dawson spoke I assumed he was lighting a cigar.

"She had every comfort," he said at last, slowly—"every comfort money could buy, and every luxury. She was never asked to help us until this summer. Stephen, you *shall* not go back. It is madness."

"I have given orders to find out when the funeral will be and notify me by wireless, and I expect to be there. Besides, you forget Louise. Some arrangement must be made for her, and for Hubert—poor silly fool that he is! I think he had better go with us, if he is alive."

A pause, and I could hear the water as it lapped against the side of the yacht. Then Dawson spoke again:

"What do you intend to do with your passengers?"

"Land them at the first safe opportunity, and provide them with transportation home."

"If you'll take my advice, you will tie that babbling fool of a doctor and the old woman up in a bag and drop them overboard, and take the girl with you. She would go willingly enough, and you could leave her abroad somewhere when you were tired of her, with Norah as her maid."

"Leave the girl out of the discussion."

"Well, as you please. But I wish this was my yacht, Stephen, instead of yours. I'd put you in irons for a few days and make a safe getaway. You would thank me for it when you came to your senses. As it is——"

"As it is," interrupted Stephen, "no one gives orders here but myself, and they are always obeyed. Now I am going to turn in for a bit, and I

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advise you to do the same. We both need sleep."

They moved on, leaving me clutching the arms of the chair and staring into space, utterly paralyzed by Dawson's dreadful suggestion. Could any death be more ignominious than to be tied up in a bag with Dr. Brownley and incontinently drowned? And who was Dawson, anyhow, and what was his connection with Stephen Gower?

My mind reverted to the three girls left at Stony-Lonesome, and the thought of them alone and unprotected in that mysterious place sickened me. Then, quite suddenly, I remembered Davis. As a chauffeur, I had not liked him, for I prefer a servant who knows his place and keeps it; but, strangely enough, the knowledge that he was there was very comforting. It seemed to me it was Isabel who was in greater danger than her sisters.

I raised the shade, and again the moonlight streamed into the little cabin. It touched Isabel's forehead, as she slept quietly and sweetly, like an innocent child. It also touched the ring upon her finger, and I knew that ring belonged to Stephen Gower. I looked away from Isabel, out the narrow little window toward the ocean shimmering in the moonlight, with its ceaseless swell and unutterable loneliness. If I only knew where we were going, or even where we were just then!

Something prompted me to dress and go out. I felt as if I should suffocate in that little room, and perhaps on deck the fresh air would cool my brain and enable me to think more clearly. Isabel's white sweater lay on a chair, also the hat she had worn last evening, so I put them on and sallied forth, dreadfully afraid, if the truth must be told, but with an idea somewhere in my head that perhaps I could find help among the

sailors. Stephen Gower had spoken of wireless messages. Surely the operator, if he could be found, would not refuse to send a call for assistance from a woman in great need of it.

I moved cautiously until I found a door leading, I hoped, on to the deck, and the rush of salty air that greeted me when I opened it proved this to be the case. Everything was very still and quiet as I walked along the spotless deck, with its comfortable chairs and polished brass rail. The only living thing I could see was a man at the wheel, and I determined to ask him where to find the wireless station. But first I would rest a few minutes to collect my thoughts and formulate the message I wished to send.

As I was about to sit down on the cushioned bench beside the rail, an arm was slipped around my waist, a face was pressed close to mine, and a voice I knew, modulated to a wonderful tenderness, whispered in my ear:

"So you, too, cannot sleep, sweetheart! Did you come out here thinking perhaps you would find me?"

I was very dizzy, and for the moment incapable of speech. I could merely turn my head away and try to free myself from the arm that only clasped me the closer.

"Isabel," he continued rapidly, "my little innocent love, let us be happy to-night and forget everything but each other. We are alone, dear, alone, with only the stars to see us. You must be kind to me to-night, Isabel, for I need you very much."

I stood with averted face, saying nothing, and after a moment he resumed:

"We will forget yesterday and tomorrow, and only remember that we are together and alone. Look at me, Isabel! Those dear eyes that told the truth to me before your lips ad-

mitted it *must* welcome me to-night! Look at me!"

I did as he requested, and faced him with what defiance I could muster. Had I been a leper, he could not more speedily have removed his encircling arm; and his voice had no tender cadence whatever as he exclaimed:

"Miss Wayne! What does this mean?"

I had an instant's sickening recollection of the fate suggested for me with Dr. Brownley in a bag, but pulled my courage together as well as I could and met his eyes steadily.

"I think I have a right to ask *you* that question, Mr. Gower."

For several moments he did not reply, and I, with the knowledge that I was really his prisoner, was decidedly uncomfortable. Then he turned again to me with the quiet courtesy he had shown at Stony-Lonesome.

"You are quite right, Miss Wayne. I owe you an explanation of several things, and, since neither of us is inclined to sleep, perhaps this is as good a time as any other. Please sit down."

He pulled forward a steamer-chair, and spread a rug over my knees, for the night air was chill.

"I thought you were Isabel," he said.

"So I inferred," I interrupted, as waspishly as possible; but he did not notice the interruption.

"I love her, Miss Wayne," he said simply. "I was at the wheel when I saw you come on deck. This is her hat and sweater, you know, and of course I did not dream it could be any one else. I called a man to take my place, and came to her as quickly as possible. The rest you know."

"What right have you to love her, Mr. Gower?"

"None whatever, Miss Wayne. I am in every way unworthy of her,

and between us there can never be any question of marriage."

He spoke as quietly as though he were discussing some casual acquaintance, and I found myself unable to utter the scathing rebuke that rose to my lips. For Stephen Gower's eyes looked directly into mine, and something in them told me that no harm would come to Isabel from this man's love.

"We are a bad lot, we Gowers—rotten through and through, as you probably know by this time," he said; "but there are some things I have not done. Miss Wayne, I did not kill Mrs. Marlow."

"But you know who did?"

The question slipped from me involuntarily, and he did not at once reply.

"I am going to tell you the whole story," he said, at last, "since you will know it sooner or later, but first I want to say that you are in no danger whatever. For a few days I must ask you to stay here as my guest. Then I will put you and Isabel ashore, and say good-by to you *both* forever, if she wishes it."

He paused a moment, but as I did not reply, he leaned forward and looked closely at me.

"You believe this, don't you, Miss Wayne?"

"I will try to," I returned; "but you will pardon me if I say that the events of the past few days have somewhat shaken my confidence in you."

"I know it, Miss Wayne. But Isabel came willingly—I did not use force or strategy. She was indiscreet enough to tell you of having seen me on the beach with—Mrs. Marlow, wearing a dark blue coat. It was necessary that she should not testify at the inquest, and she did not wish to do so. So she walked up the beach, where I met her with the yacht's launch. We came as near the

shore as we could, and I carried her out to it. She knew you would join her on the yacht as soon as we could manage it."

"Did she think," I inquired acidly, "that I would walk trustingly up the beach to meet you?"

"I simply told her you would come, and you see you are here. Also Norah and Dr. Brownley—quite a nice little party."

"I fail to see the joke," I snapped.

"May I smoke, Miss Wayne? It may make it easier for me when I tell you the story of my life. It is like a dime novel in some ways, I assure you. But first I want to be strictly personal. Are you warm enough?"

He tucked the rug more closely about me as he resumed slowly:

"I loved Isabel from the first time I saw her, but I did not intend to tell her so. I meant to efface myself as soon as possible, but circumstances made it necessary for me to stay near Stony-Lonesome. We went sailing together, and took long walks—of which you disapproved heartily, I know. Then one day my eyes met hers, and I knew she loved me. I lost my head—other and wiser men have done that—and spoke when I should have been silent."

I felt my heart give an involuntary throb of sympathy. Why is it we women often find ourselves sympathetic when we expect to be coldly disapproving? Stephen Gower continued:

"Just for that one hour we were absolutely happy. Then I went back to my bungalow, and realized what I had done. We have accumulated much money, Miss Wayne, in various ways not very creditable, and we intended to make our greatest stroke this summer, but we are under suspicion. That is the reason you were put in the house, you know—you who are above suspicion. What a com-

fortable position that must be to occupy!"

So that was the reason we had been offered Stony-Lonesome, with its luxurious but unfortunate equipment. I was glad to have it explained at last.

"There was only one thing for me to do," he went on, "and the next day I did it, although it tore my very heartstrings. I told Isabel I could never marry her, and that after this summer she must put me out of her life forever. She could not understand, poor little girl, but she said she would trust me always. I wish she had not said that, somehow. Just one thing more, Miss Wayne: Isabel was on the yacht last night with Norah, but I was at my bungalow on shore."

The quiet, even voice ceased speaking, and for a few moments I listened to the lapping of the water in silence. Then I looked into my companion's eyes.

"Stephen Gower," I said, "what have you done, that you cannot ask a girl to marry you?"

He told me the truth, sitting quietly at my side on board his own yacht, and I slowly arrived at the conclusion that I could not blame Isabel, as I should have liked to do; for even as I listened to the disgraceful story I knew I sympathized with him, and hoped he would sail away into safety as he had planned to do.

And after a while the stars paled and faded, and a faint rosy light appeared in the east. I could see a coast line, too, with an abrupt point jutting out into the ocean. Stephen Gower pointed to it.

"Over there is Stony-Lonesome. We have been steaming all night in a circle, Miss Wayne."

I gazed longingly at the point of land.

"How I wish," I said, "that I knew what happened there last night!"

CHAPTER XI

I have asked Sylvia to write me an account of what happened at Stony-Lonesome during my absence, and I shall include it just as she wrote it, although it might be improved by a little polishing. Her viewpoint on certain subjects is surely very different from mine, and I can never bring myself entirely to forgive the girls for deceiving me about Davis. To be sure, Dolly insists that this was a fortunate thing in the end, but I cannot agree with her. However, this is not the place to take up the question of who is right or wrong, especially when I know I am right.

Sylvia's story follows, and I have asked her to be as brief as possible and spare us all the eulogies of Beverly she possibly can.

CHAPTER XII

Of course I knew in my heart from the beginning that it wasn't really right to deceive Aunt Clara about Beverly, but I had to do it, because otherwise he could not have been at Stony-Lonesome.

Beverly hasn't any money, and Mother didn't want me to marry him. She had dreams of millions being laid at my feet, and an army of eligibles falling over each other in mad efforts to win my hand. But I did not want millions, and I hated eligible young men. I only wanted Beverly. He wanted me, too, so why shouldn't we have each other, if we could manage it?

Beverly seemed to be awfully surprised when I told him we were going to Stony-Lonesome, and he asked me a lot of questions about father's business connection with Colonel Gower, but of course I did not know anything about it. Then he laughed and told me to cheer up, for he was going to be in that neighborhood, and he thought maybe he would see some-

thing of us. Later on, he told me he had secured a job as chauffeur at Colonel Gower's, just to be near me, and would be there all summer. I remember saying:

"Oh, Bev, how *lovely*! But will they let you have such a long vacation?"

I forgot to say that Beverly was employed by the Government, but at that time I didn't know just what his duties really were. He said he was going away for three months, anyhow, and asked me if I had any objections to having him near, and of course after that I had nothing to say. I told him Aunt Clara was coming to chaperon us and he said:

"Well, that's lucky. We won't have any trouble pulling the wool over *her* eyes."

And we didn't.

Of course I had to tell the girls, and they all thought it was a great lark, so everybody but Aunt Clara knew that it was Beverly Adams who met us the night we arrived, and not just Davis, the chauffeur, and it all seemed very romantic and like a novel.

But I wish now that we had never heard of Stony-Lonesome, for I don't believe Isabel will ever be quite the same again, and I am so happy myself that I cannot bear to think of the shadow that must always cloud her life, even though, as Aunt Clara says, it will grow less with time.

I never blamed Isabel a bit. Stephen Gower certainly was a fascinating man when he wanted to be, and he was always at his best with her. But I do blame myself now for being so absorbed in my own affairs, and so busy learning to drive a car, with Bev to teach me, that I did not realize just where she was drifting. It seemed perfectly natural to me, for instance, that Isabel should start out in the motor with us, and that when we accidentally, as I thought, met Stephen Gower, and he suggested a

sail or a stroll up the beach, she should prefer doing it to going on with us. But Beverly didn't like it, and after a while he began to worry about it and try to prevent it. But what could he do, with Mr. Gower thinking he was merely a chauffeur, and Isabel insisting to me that she was only amusing herself, just as she would with any attractive man.

So the days slipped away until the night Mrs. Marlow was murdered. And this brings me to Aunt Clara's disappearance—which is the place I am supposed to begin my story, only I wanted to explain about Davis being Beverly right in the beginning, and get it off my mind, for I can't help feeling a little bit peeved that Aunt Clara or anybody else should think that I would frivol with a chauffeur, even if he *did* look like a Christy illustration.

We didn't miss Aunt Clara just at first. I remember Polly's asking where she was, and that Dawson replied she was talking with Mr. Stephen Gower in the library, so of course we thought everything was all right. We were awfully upset over Isabel and everything, and tremendously excited about the inquest which was to be held that afternoon over poor Mrs. Marlow. Of course we didn't really want to appear as witnesses, but we did want most awfully to hear everything that went on, and we were afraid Aunt Clara would not allow us to be present unless we had to be there. She has the most old-fashioned notions about the things young girls ought to do and say, and if we lived up to them we should certainly have the Lily of the Valley beaten to a frazzle so far as wondering innocence is concerned. But of course we *don't*.

When lunch was served there was no Aunt Clara. Dawson brought me a note, which he said he had found on the library table. Aunt Clara's

note said that she had gone to join Isabel, and that we were not to worry, for everything was all right. But when I started to read it aloud to the twins, somehow my throat contracted suddenly, and before I knew it I was crying in a hopeless, frightened sort of way, with my head down on the table and my nose in the salt.

I think I should have cried myself sick if Dawson had not offered me the chops just then. Something in the tone of his voice when he said, "Tomato sauce, Miss?" made me look up and catch his eye. It was fixed on me with a coldly interested expression that somehow braced me up better than the tenderest sympathy. So I took a chop and managed to eat it, although I thought it would choke me.

After lunch everybody began to hunt for Dr. Brownley, but as he could not be found there was no inquest. This frightened me, too, for he made the fourth person who had silently disappeared from Stony-Lonesome in two days. First Isabel and Norah, and now Aunt Clara and Dr. Brownley. It did seem weird, and I told the girls not to go out of my sight for an instant, for I did not think I could stand it if another person was spirited away. You can't impress the twins, however, so they only giggled, and Dolly said that she believed Aunt Clara had eloped with Dr. Brownley, and she had noticed they were very chummy together on the porch that morning; which seemed a frivolous and unnecessary remark under the circumstances, and I told her so.

I had only a few words with Beverly that afternoon. He came up on the porch in his chauffeur's uniform, and asked if we had any orders; then he said in a very low voice:

"I won't see you again this afternoon, Sylvia, and perhaps not until to-morrow, but don't be frightened at

anything. No matter what happens, you will be all right."

I said in rather a shaky voice:

"Oh, Bev, don't say that anything more will happen! And don't, *don't* go away and leave us here alone!"

He didn't look a bit like the Beverly I knew when he answered me. Somehow, he seemed much older, and all the careless gaiety I loved had disappeared. His voice was very grave as he said:

"Sylvia, I must ask you to trust me, and not to be afraid. Be brave just a little while longer, and everything will be all right. Can you do this for me?"

And I said:

"I could do anything in the world for you, Beverly, except not be afraid, for I *am*, and I can't help it. But I can try and be brave enough not to show it. Will that do?"

So Beverly went away and left us also, and we sat forlornly on the porch, expecting something to happen. But nothing happened at all, and the only person I saw in the grounds was Dawson, going into the gardener's cottage. I heard afterward that the village police were stationed at the gates, and could not let anybody in or out, but I did not know this at that time.

When dinner-time came Dawson did not serve it. We had one of the upstairs maids instead, and I was so relieved not to have him there, with his stealthy tread and cold, fishy eyes, that I never even asked where he was.

I insisted that we should all sleep in one room that night, and the girls were very willing, for, in spite of their efforts to conceal it and laugh and joke as usual, I could see that they were lonely and depressed, just as I was. We decided to sleep in Aunt Clara's room, as it was the largest, so we went up there right after dinner and locked ourselves in.

And this brings me to the place my story really begins.

CHAPTER XIII

The evening passed somehow, and after a while the twins lay down on Aunt Clara's bed, while I had the big couch near the window. I wanted to go to sleep dreadfully, but my eyes were propped wide open, and I kept thinking and thinking about everything, and waiting for something to happen, just as I had done all day.

We had put on our kimono's, for, as Dolly said, if anything *should* happen, we might as well meet it looking as decent as possible, and we all agreed that we knew we should not sleep a wink.

But I must have gone to sleep after all, for I found myself suddenly sitting upright, listening to the clocks striking slowly and solemnly, the way they always sound at night.

"One o'clock," I said; but a gasp from the bed interrupted me.

"Oh, no," said Polly, "it isn't. They've been striking and striking, and, oh Sylvia—"

But even as she spoke the clock on the landing struck two, followed after a moment's pause, by the one in the dining-room. Again the pause, then three, then four, and so on around to twelve.

"*There!*" breathed Dolly. "Now perhaps they'll stop." But they rested only a minute or two, then *one* boomed out, and straight on to twelve they went exactly as before.

I realize it does not seem like very much, and, looking backward, it appears perfectly silly to have been afraid of clocks. But it was very different in that remote place, and in that big, lonely house with all the queer things that had happened there, and we were all three cold and shaking as we huddled together on the bed, and the clocks kept on striking and striking.

Suddenly Dolly stopped shivering and went to the door.

"I'm going to see what it is," she announced bravely, although her voice trembled a little. "Who's afraid of a clock, anyhow?"

Polly and I both clutched her, but she shook us off, ran to the door, and went out into the hall, and of course we followed her. Not for worlds would I have lost sight of either of the twins that night, for I was so afraid one or both of them would be spirited away.

Dolly had switched on the light, and I could see the flutter of her blue kimono as she flurried down the hall. Just at the head of the stairs she stopped suddenly, and leaned over the banister, and then she beckoned to us, putting her finger on her lips to warn us to say nothing. The dining-room clock was striking ten, I remember, as we left Aunt Clara's room, and now the clock on the landing had joined in. Dolly could see it from where she stood, and as she did not seem at all terrified, we plucked up courage to join her.

What we saw was certainly not very alarming—just a woman standing before a clock, watching it strike. Before it had quite finished, she hurried down the short flight of stairs, and crossed the hall in the direction of the dining room. Instinctively we knew that the clock in there would strike eleven, which it did almost immediately. Then she came back again, and hastening noiselessly up the steps to the landing, turned the hands of the clock from ten to eleven and waited while it struck. As she stood there, her face was turned more directly towards us, and the twins gave a simultaneous gasp of recognition, while Polly whispered excitedly:

"The Disappearing Lady who answered our bell that night! Look, Sylvia!"

But she was gone again into the dining-room, only to be back before twelve had finished striking, turning the hands of the clock upon the landing from eleven to twelve. Then she stood, tense and rigid, listening and counting the chimes. As the last stroke died slowly away, she looked toward the hall door and waited expectantly.

"Hubert!" she called. "Hubert! I'm here, dear, waiting for you."

She listened a moment, as though expecting an answer, and when none came crouched down upon the step with a sort of wailing cry, and hid her face in her hands.

"It is the very same woman we told you about," whispered Dolly. "Do you see, Sylvia?"

But I saw only a girl, not much older than I am, crying bitterly, with her frail figure shaken by hard sobs that seemed to come from her very soul, and before I realized what I was doing I was sitting on the step beside her, and had my arm around her. She shrank from my touch and looked pitifully up into my face.

"Please don't," she said, "I will be quiet."

"What is the matter?" I said. "Tell me what troubles you, and who you are."

But she only looked vacantly at me, and repeated the assurance that she would be quiet. I took her hand and held it gently, while I tried again.

"What is your name?" I said, and this time she understood.

"Louise," she said. "And I'm not doing any harm. I'm only waiting for Hubert. He said he would come at twelve o'clock, and it struck twelve, didn't it?"

She looked at me in a questioning manner, and when I nodded, she broke again into the low wail that was so heartrending.

"He didn't come!" she moaned. "Oh, he didn't come!"

"Sylvia," called Dolly sharply, "come back. There is some one coming."

But somehow I was not afraid for myself, although I've always been the coward of the family. I could only think of the girl crouching there on the step, apparently so helpless and so afraid. I put my arm around her and forced her to rise as gently as I could.

"Come with me, Louise," I said. "Come quickly."

Much to my surprise, she followed me docilely up the stairs, and together we ran along the passage into Aunt Clara's room. The twins were just ahead of us, and I could hear footsteps in the hall as Dolly slammed and locked the door the instant we were inside.

"There!" she said breathlessly.

Then we all stood and looked at one another, and at the strange girl, who, to my surprise, did not look at any of us in return. Instead, she walked around the room, examining everything, and even opening closet doors in an assured manner that amazed me. When she came to the bay window, she scrutinized the couch and easy-chair, as though looking for someone who should have been there. At last she spoke, quite naturally, as if we had always known her:

"Where's Mother?"

I did not know what to say, but, without waiting for an answer, she went again to the closet and took out one of Aunt Clara's gowns, holding it to the light and examining it closely.

"This is not Mother's," she said. "She never wears brown. Where is Mother, and what are you doing in her room?"

This last to Dolly, rather sharply, and for once in her life my little sister's ready tongue failed her, and she had nothing to say. The girl con-

tinued to wander around, and finally paused before the dressing-table, looking carefully at its contents.

"Where is my picture?" she demanded. "My picture in my wedding dress? It always stood here in a silver frame. And Father's was in the middle, with Stephen over there."

A sudden light dawned upon me, and I went nearer and touched her gently.

"Are you Louise Gower?" I asked. "And is this your Mother's room?"

"Louise Gower?" she repeated vaguely. "Louise Gower? She was a girl who was happy and laughed very often. Oh, no! I'm not Louise Gower; I am Louise Grant—Mrs. Hubert Grant."

Then, quite suddenly, the terrified expression returned to her face, and she crouched upon the floor, her head in her hands.

"Hubert, Hubert," she moaned, "what have they done with you? It struck twelve, and you never came. It's been striking ever since, and I—oh, *don't!*"—as Polly crossed the room toward her. "I will be quiet—I will not scream—but I must look out of the window and see if he is coming."

Polly had been standing near the window, looking out into the grounds, and the eyes that met mine were very large and round.

"Sylvia," she whispered, "something is happening outside. The grounds are full of men! And don't you hear steps in the hall? Just now some one turned the handle of the door."

Some one was knocking now, loudly and imperatively, and Beverly's voice said:

"Open the door, Sylvia, open the door! I must speak to you."

At this, poor Louise flung herself upon me and clasped my hands in hers.

"No, no," she cried; "don't do it."

They will take me away. Don't open the door—please don't."

But Beverly was calling to me, and I motioned to Dolly to open the door, for I felt as if I needed him very much.

A woman in a nurse's dress followed him, and went at once to Louise, detaching the hands that clung so desperately to mine, and speaking soothingly as she drew her toward the couch.

"There, dear child," she said, "it's all right. I have something to tell you. Can you realize what I say? Try very hard to understand me."

Louise gradually became less tense, and the large dark eyes lost a little of their terror.

"I will try," she said.

Beverly motioned us to be quiet, and we scarcely dared to breathe as we listened. The nurse put her hand tenderly beneath Louise's head and raised it until she looked directly into her eyes.

"Louise," she said, very slowly, "we have found Hubert. Listen dear, and try to understand. Hubert is here, in this house. He is ill and needs you."

"Hubert needs me," repeated Louise, as yet without real understanding, and again the nurse spoke quietly yet emphatically:

"Hubert is ill, Louise. He is very ill, and he needs you. Can you come to him?"

Louise arose and adjusted her dress. The strained, agonized expression had left her face, and her voice was calm and assured as she spoke to the nurse.

"I am ready," she said. "Please take me to Hubert."

Beverly opened the door for them, and closed it gently, before any of us spoke. Then he said:

"That is Louise Gower, Sylvia, and her husband is downstairs—dying."

"Oh, Bev," I said, "how terrible!" and before I knew it I began to cry. Polly said afterwards that in those days we were ready to turn on the waterworks at a moment's notice, and, so far as I am concerned, I fear she was right.

"Girls," said Beverly, "I have a long and strange story to tell you. Do you think you can all three listen quietly?"

I wish I had time to repeat it just as Bev told us, but Aunt Clara has warned me that I must be brief, and that repetition does not add to effect, so I will try just to state the facts, and omit the questions we asked and many of the details.

Well, then, Beverly said that Colonel Gower and his son were *counterfeiters*, and that they had made lots of money before they were even suspected, for Colonel Gower had an office on Wall Street, and was supposed to be a broker, with quite a large acquaintance among New York business men of good standing. They made gold coins (apparently) that were so perfect an imitation that only experts could detect them, until they had been in use for some time and had begun to deteriorate. Their apparatus was under the house, and the entrance was through the bath-house door Aunt Clara has mentioned. They were smugglers, too, Beverly said, and had pulled off a great many large deals in the past, but much success had made them overconfident, which was their undoing.

The Government had been trying for years to locate the counterfeiters, and because Colonel Gower thought he was suspected, he had put us into his house that summer to avert suspicion. The Secret Service, where Beverly was employed, had detailed him to go to Stony-Lonesome and watch the place, so he answered Colonel Gower's advertisement for a

chauffeur, and was surprised enough when he found who was to be in the house.

"I did not really expect any developments, Sylvia," he said, "or I should never have allowed you to come. I thought he would simply leave you in possession and go away for a time."

"Tell us about Louise?" interrupted Dolly. "Never mind why we came here."

Two years ago Louise Gower had married Hubert Grant. They had come home to Stony-Lonesome to visit, and apparently been very happy until Hubert disappeared six or eight months ago, just before the baby came. Louise had been insane ever since its birth (fortunately, it did not live), and the nurse had stayed on with her, and had told Beverly all she knew.

They put her in the gardener's cottage," Beverly said, "and it was Louise you could hear scream occasionally at night. She escaped and came back over here the night you arrived."

"Why does she make the clocks strike?" demanded Polly.

"She expected her husband at twelve o'clock, and it was her delusion that if she could make the clock strike twelve he would come. Poor child! We found him for her tonight, but she will not have him long."

"Where was he, Beverly?" I said, but before he could answer we heard footsteps in the hall.

"Bring him in here," said Louise's voice. "Be very careful."

She entered and stood aside to allow two men carrying a cot to pass her. Upon the cot was a figure, very long and straight and very still. The nurse followed, with a whispered word to Beverly, and, after directing the men where to place their burden, motioned them to withdraw.

Louise, her manner composed, and her voice quite firm and calm, knelt beside the cot and clasped the listless hand in both of hers.

"Hubert," she said, "it is I—Louise. I am here beside you, dear. Look at me, Hubert! It is *Louise*."

But the sheet over the motionless figure never stirred, and I turned to Beverly with a whispered question.

"Not yet, Sylvia," he whispered, "but very soon. He is going fast."

The twins clung closely to me, awed and silent, and I felt the tears gathering in my eyes and a lump in the throat that comes when one is especially sad. But Louise's voice did not falter as she began to speak again.

"Hubert, you can hear me, can't you? I never knew what they did down there under the house. I never thought where the money came from—why should I? Oh, Hubert, I *was* innocent when I married you, and what you said that day was cruel! I did not know! I was *not* an accomplice. Hubert, Hubert, tell me you believe me! Press my hand if you cannot speak—anything to show you believe me."

It seemed to me that even the dead must respond to the passionate appeal in her voice, but the quiet figure never stirred, and after a while Louise ceased to plead and sat huddled in a despairing heap beside the cot.

So we all sat there in silence while the stars faded and a rosy light appeared in the East. By and by the ocean sparkled in the sunlight just as it did that first morning, and the nurse gently raised Louise and led her from the room, so we knew that Hubert Grant's soul had departed with the night.

Beverly pointed to a black speck against the horizon.

"That is Stephen Gower's yacht," he said.

Then he insisted on our all going over into my room and having coffee sent up. When we were drinking it he told us how the police, who were searching the house last night to find the counterfeiting apparatus, had discovered Hubert Grant locked in beneath the house and very ill. He had evidently been a prisoner there for some time, for two rooms had been furnished for his use. Beverly did not know who he was, but one of the village policemen, who was helping in the search, had recognized him, and they had at once brought him upstairs.

Beverly said that there were lots of rooms built in the rock beneath the house and lighted by electricity, and that the apparatus which had been discovered for making the counterfeit money was most elaborate and wonderful, while the coins themselves were so perfect in every detail, weight and color, that he could not tell them from the real ones when they were side by side.

I think I had better let Aunt Clara finish telling about what happened at Stony-Lonesome, for I cannot bear to write about Isabel, and anyhow, I am apt to talk too much.

But I want it distinctly understood that Beverly was simply wonderful in the way he managed everything, and Dr. Brownley agrees with me that his handling of the case was *masterly*. Even Aunt Clara admits she is glad he was here, and says he did very well, but I think he was *heroic* and that a great detective was lost to the world when he left the Secret Service and went into business with father.

CHAPTER XIV

When I saw Isabel the morning after I had watched the sunrise with Stephen Gower, I did not know what to say to her, but, as might have been expected from one of John's daugh-

ters, she relieved me of the responsibility of speaking first.

"What has Stephen been telling you, Aunt Clara?"

Isabel's directness in approaching a subject had always seemed to me to be a most admirable characteristic, but to-day I could have dispensed with it, for I was not yet ready to talk. Nevertheless, I sat down and drew her to me as I answered as gently as possible that he had told me everything.

"Then," remarked my niece, "you know more about him than I do, for he was not to tell *me* everything until to-day. I have not asked him to do this, for I wanted to show him I trusted him, but he has insisted.

"And I think," she added thoughtfully, "that I'll go up on deck now and have it over. I've had my rolls and coffee, Aunt Clara, and you had better ring for yours."

She kissed me in a perfunctory sort of way, and started for the door, but turned with her hand on the handle to say emphatically:

"I'd better say right now, Aunt Clara, that nothing I could hear would make any difference in my feeling for Stephen—it doesn't matter what it might be."

She went out then, and I had my rolls and coffee, listening to Norah's lamentations and answering her many questions as well as I could. She told me that Dr. Brownley had been violently seasick and was lying down, quite prostrate. I gave her my smelling salts to take to him, and charged her to tell him they were her own. Then I refreshed myself by a bath and a careful toilet, and went in search of Isabel.

I found her in the steamer-chair on deck, with Stephen beside her, and she had been crying. As I approached, I heard him saying very earnestly:

"And so, you see, there can never

be any question of marriage where I am concerned. But, oh, my dear, if I had only known you long ago, before it was too late!"

"It isn't too late now, Stephen. We could go away—to-day—and begin over again somewhere else."

"*Would* you, Isabel—after what I have just told you?"

I judged it was time to warn them that they were not alone, so I said to Stephen Gower:

"Have you told her everything you told me last night?"

A dull, painful red mounted to the roots of his hair as he unwillingly met my eye and placed a chair for me.

"Not quite all, Miss Wayne. But I was not going to paint myself any whiter than I am, for I wish Isabel to know everything."

"Do so," I advised, and tried to harden my heart as I looked at them.

I wonder why it is that the sorrows of the young always seem so much more pitiful than those of maturer years. I am sure the older hearts rebound less quickly, and the scars left by wounds are much deeper and refuse to be effaced. But so it is, and as I looked at Isabel I fell in line with the rest of the world and thought immediately of her youth, with a painful tightening of my heart-strings.

"Stephen," she said, and her voice was sharp in its cadence, "what is it you have not told me?"

But just as he was about to speak, he was informed that the launch was waiting for him to go ashore, and Isabel jumped up and caught his arm.

"Stephen, Stephen," she cried excitedly, "don't go ashore! You—*you must not go.*"

"Dear," he said, very slowly and tenderly, "I really must. I am going to my mother's funeral."

Then he looked at me in a help-

less sort of way, with sorrowful appealing eyes. I think I mentioned before that they were the color of violets, and very expressive.

"*You* tell her," he said.

Isabel had released his arm and was staring at him, large-eyed and wondering.

"I don't understand," she said, "your mother and father are abroad—like mine."

Stephen Gower did not meet her eyes, but looked out over the ocean toward Stony-Lonesome, and I would have given much to have been able to help them both. Still, I knew I must speak and that quickly, for I saw Dawson approaching dressed for the shore, and the launch had already been lowered.

"Isabel," I said, "Mrs. Marlow is buried to-day, and she was Stephen's mother."

Isabel said nothing for a moment, but gazed at him with an incredulous horror in her eyes that must have been hard indeed for him to meet, and I will admit that my heart ached for him. But Isabel was speaking now in a low, uncertain voice I hardly recognized.

"Your mother! Mrs. Marlowe your mother! Then, who is your father, and where is he?"

Dawson had joined us by this time, and stood looking at us with an inquiring and slightly bored expression. Stephen stepped back a little and touched his arm, motioning him to step forward.

"This is my father," he said—"Colonel Gower."

But Isabel covered her face with her hands and sank into the nearest chair.

"Oh, Stephen, Stephen," she sobbed, "how could you, how could you?"

I cannot recall just what happened for some minutes, but after a while I realized that Dawson, or Colonel

Gower, as I suppose I must call him, had seated himself near Isabel and was talking to her quietly.

"My dear young lady," he said, "you are naturally much distressed and unnerved by the occurrences of the past few days. But you really love Stephen, do you not?"

"Yes," assented Isabel, without further comment.

"Then do not allow him to go ashore. As surely as we land, we shall be arrested, and it will mean long years in the penitentiary for him. Think of all that means to you both. If he would say the word, this yacht could be headed for sea and never heard of again. Your excellent aunt and Dr. Brownley can return by steamer. I will vanish from your horizon, and you and Stephen can be married and live happily ever after. A new life in a new country, with all the past wiped out."

Isabel was listening now, with an intent, absorbed expression and her hands tightly clenched. Colonel Gower, watching her closely, continued:

"It cannot do his mother any good now for Stephen to be with her. She would be the last one to want him to suffer. Her death was accidental——"

But here Stephen interrupted him, squaring his shoulders and speaking rapidly.

"Listen, Isabel," he said. "You shall know the whole truth, and then you shall decide our future. Mother slipped and fell down the steps, that is true, but it is not the whole truth. Tell her everything," he commanded, turning to his father.

"Tell her yourself," returned that gentleman, "if you are fool enough to do it."

"Tell me, Stephen," she said.

"This morning," he said, speaking to her alone, "I told you how we made our money—that we were smugglers, counterfeiters, and everything that

was bad—criminals, in short; I told you about my sister, who was insane and lived with a nurse in the gardener's cottage—and you still loved me and would have married me. Is that true, Isabel?"

The little involuntary motion of Isabel's hands was more eloquent than any words, and he continued slowly:

"Two years ago Louise, who knew nothing about all this, and had been educated abroad, married an honest man. They came to visit Stony-Lonesome six months ago, and while there he accidentally discovered our apparatus and our business. He was furiously angry, and insisted she knew it and had deceived him. He would not listen to reason, and declared he meant to inform on us, and that he would divorce Louise. He spoke very cruelly to her, and said that he was going to make arrangements to leave that night, and would come to her at twelve o'clock to tell her the decision he had reached about the child."

"Well?" Isabel's voice was so low I could hardly distinguish it, and Stephen did not meet her eyes as he continued.

"Hubert Grant never came back. We—my father and I—got him into the library and took him down into the cellar, the way you went, Miss Wayne. He made no outcry, for I held a pistol to his head, and my father bound and gagged him."

I shuddered, for I had a vivid recollection of that pistol, and could sympathize with Hubert Grant.

"It was our intention to keep him there only until we had completed our arrangements to leave the country, and when we had gone to sea on this yacht to send a wireless to Louise so that she could release him. Two rooms were furnished for him, and he was well supplied with food. We meant him to be comfortable,

although we could not allow him to interfere with our plans."

I heard myself murmur, "Of course not," but sincerely hoped no one heard me, as I immediately asked as severely as I could why they had not gone away as they intended.

"It was because of Louise," Stephen replied. "My mother would not leave her in her state of health, nor would she take her with us. Moreover, we were not quite ready, as we had to finish some work. It was to be our last big *coup*."

"It certainly *was* our last," interpolated Colonel Gower. "Be quick, Stephen, and get this over."

"I won't go into details," resumed Stephen. "Father thought best to put some people in the house, and so you came. He posed as butler, and mother as housekeeper, and we continued our work every night and often during the day. Louise made trouble, for she was always trying to escape and get home. The night you arrived she succeeded and went to her room, where your sisters were. She did not answer any bell—that was merely chance. The third bell in her room and mother's was for their maid, and was disconnected."

He paused an instant, and then resumed with evident effort.

"Hubert got ill with typhoid fever, but we did not get a doctor for him—how could we? He was made as comfortable as possible, but mother was not satisfied. She said it was murder, and she would not countenance it. One night——"

"Yes," said Isabel, "one night?"

"It was raining and quite dark. Mother went down to the room where Hubert was, through the bath-house—you know she had the key. She meant to bring him to the gardener's cottage with Louise, and nurse him. Somehow, she half carried him up the steps, but at the top she met us looking for her."

"Oh, Stephen!" cried Isabel.

"I had talked with her on the beach that day—you saw us, Isabel—and refused to have Hubert on the yacht, as she urged, for I hated him. Well, there is not much more to tell. We took him away from her by force, and carried him back to his prison. She clung to his coat and fought for him, but the cloth gave way. It was then she slipped and fell."

"And you left her there?" said Isabel. "Your mother?"

Stephen did not answer, but Colonel Gower said quietly:

"What else could we do? My poor wife died instantly—there is no doubt of that, otherwise it would have been different. Day was breaking as she fell, and almost immediately I roused your aunt and gave the alarm. Do not blame Stephen."

But Isabel only looked at them both with incredulous horror, and said slowly.

"You left her there, in the rain, where she had fallen—*your mother?*"

Stephen Gower sank into a chair as though his strength had suddenly failed him, and pressed his hand to his head.

"Oh, Isabel," he exclaimed, "don't! Can't you be merciful to me? Do you suppose there is an instant, night or day, that I don't see her lying there? Do you——"

But Colonel Gower interrupted him in the calm, impersonal voice he had used during the interview.

"Let us leave out useless regrets and recriminations. What is *done* is *done*. The question is"—he turned abruptly to Isabel—"are you going to allow Stephen to go ashore and deliberately put his head into the noose? This is his yacht, not mine, and it is his orders that are obeyed. Otherwise, there would be no question about it."

Stephen was looking at Isabel with

very real love and longing in his eyes.

"Isabel," he said, "the future is in your hands. If I go ashore, it is the end. I shall never see you again. If not——"

He paused abruptly, and Colonel Gower completed the sentence:

"If not, it is the beginning. There will be a new life in a new country, with you two alone together. The past will be buried and forgotten. My dear child"—here Colonel Gower laid his hand on her arm and spoke very gently—"this is Stephen's chance in life. I am an old man, and it does not matter about me, but he is young and deeply in love with you. He has never loved before, and I think you can do with him what you will. Now, which shall it be for Stephen?"

I held my breath as I waited for her answer, for I knew I was powerless, no matter what decision she made.

"Which shall it be for Stephen," repeated Colonel Gower—"hard labor in the penitentiary, disgrace, and misery, or freedom and a new life with you?"

"Isabel," said Stephen slowly, "if there is a God, may He give you strength to do what is right. I am in no position to decide, for I love you, and for me it means heaven or hell. Which shall it be?"

Isabel, very pale, had risen and was grasping the back of her chair for support, and I could see that she had to make several efforts before she could speak.

"If," she said, addressing both the Gowers—"if I were alone with you two in some strange land, and should in any way oppose you, what would you do? Would you push me aside, and leave me where I fell—living or dead?"

"Oh, Isabel," cried Stephen. "Oh, my dear! I love you!"

She looked directly at him with large, questioning eyes.

"You loved your mother," she said, "didn't you?"

Then, as he made no reply, she resumed, speaking very gently:

"I think I shall always love you, Stephen, for something within me makes me do it—something beyond my control. But I know now that I will never marry you, because—because, Stephen, I am afraid."

"Isabel," he interrupted, "I did not know you could be so cruel!"

"It is not for me to say where your duty lies," continued Isabel, in the same curiously calm voice. "You must decide that for yourself. I will not ask you to put me ashore here, for I can do as you planned for Aunt Clara. I want you to be safe—it—it kills me to think of the other thing—but oh, Stephen, I can never marry you!"

I don't know where Isabel got strength to say it. She looked so small and childish as she stood there facing the two men who she knew stopped at nothing. I doubt if in her place I could have done it, but there was no fear in her face, only determination and great sorrow.

With an angry exclamation, Colonel Gower started toward her, but Stephen caught him by the arm.

"Stand back," he said. "This is my affair, not yours. Moreover, she is right. This time you shall have nothing to say, and what awaits us on shore is your just desert and mine. Isabel, you have decided for me."

He pushed Colonel Gower aside, and paid no more attention to me than if I were a wooden image. Taking Isabel in his arms, he crushed her to him, and kissed her brow, her eyes, her lips.

"My sweetheart," he said. "My little innocent girl! I wish for your sake that you had never seen me, but

since the past cannot be undone, I can only ask you to forgive me for everything. Will you do this, Isabel?"

"Oh, Stephen, Stephen," she sobbed, clinging to him in a way that amazed me, "I love you, I love you!"

Once again Stephen Gower kissed her on the lips, gently and reverently. Then he turned to me and placed her hands in mine.

"Take care of her," he said, and walked away to where the launch was waiting.

I held Isabel close, and together we watched the launch glide away over the sparkling water. Colonel Gower, as he unwillingly followed his son, had raised his hat with elaborate courtesy and remarked that he hoped she realized what she had done, but I doubt if she even heard him.

The launch grew smaller as it bent its course toward the point of land we knew was Stony-Lonesome, and as the stretch of water widened between us until even the foam in its wake vanished, Isabel ran to the railing of the yacht and stretched out her arms.

"Stephen, Stephen," she cried, "come back! I cannot let you go."

Then, just as I reached her, and for the first time in her healthy young life, Isabel fainted.

CHAPTER XV

Well, I have but little more to tell, and I will be as brief as possible, for even now I do not like to remember our last day at Stony-Lonesome.

A wireless to the captain of the yacht from Stephen Gower brought us to the village that night, where Davis, or I should say Beverly Adams, met us. But before I left the town I bought our tickets for New York, since I was determined not to stay another day in that house.

We put Isabel at once to bed, and the rest of us packed like mad all the

evening, for the girls were as anxious to leave as I was. While we worked, Sylvia told me what had happened the night before, and that Hubert Grant was dead.

She also said that the Gowers were arrested immediately on landing, and that Stephen had made a full confession, and asked to be allowed to attend his mother's funeral. This was granted him, and he went in charge of Beverly, and was taken to New York on the evening train. There would be no trial, and we should be thus spared the painful necessity of appearing as witnesses.

Beverly Adams met us in New York when we arrived, and Sylvia informed me that they planned to be married in the spring. I said nothing in reply, but cabled to John and Mary to return as soon as possible, since the responsibility of their daughters was too much for me, and they came at once.

I went to my own apartment, thankful for the quiet and peaceful surroundings, and the next winter passed as usual. Toward spring, however, Isabel asked to be allowed to visit me.

"I don't want to be selfish, Aunt Clara," she said, "but it seems to me that I cannot endure to see Sylvia getting ready to be married. I just can't."

I asked a question then that I had wanted to ask all winter.

"Do you write to Stephen, Isabel?"

"No," she said quietly; "it is better not. He would not wish it. After Sylvia is married, Aunt Clara, I am going into settlement work. It is all I can do with my life after last summer."

I mentioned this remark to her mother the day after Sylvia was married, when the first warm sun was bringing out the crocus in the park, and Mary looked a little troubled.

"I don't know just what to do

about it," she said. "She takes no interest in anything."

The twins were there, making a list of Sylvia's gifts, and Dolly as usual giggled.

"I shouldn't worry too much over Isabel, mother," she remarked. "She still has some interest left in life. I saw Beverly's friend, Jim Randolph—the best man—(wasn't he scrumptious, Johnny?)—showing her some new dances after the wedding yesterday."

Mary seemed puzzled at this, and asked what had become of Isabel that afternoon.

"She has gone down town," replied Polly, "to have the black ribbon on her hat changed to pink roses, and to be fitted for her white serge."

Mary glanced at me almost apologetically.

"She is so young, Clara," she remarked, "and at her age hearts should not ache long."

I know that is true, and it is a merciful Providence that allows time to soften trouble. But I know also that Isabel keeps a man's ring in a certain little locked case, and that she never mentions Stony-Lonesome.

I hear from there sometimes, for Dr. Brownley writes me now and then, in a very interesting manner. He is thinking of giving up the practice of medicine and making his home in New York, and I cannot deny that this will be agreeable to me. He has proved himself a most valuable friend, and Dolly's remarks upon his personal appearance are quite uncalled for. Perhaps some time—but this is not my story.

Louise Gower became violently insane again after her husband's death, and is now in a private sanitarium near New York, recommended by Dr. Brownley. There is more than enough money to surround her with every luxury, and Isabel, who goes to

see her oftener than we wish, says that she is not unhappy if she is allowed to have a clock that she can make to strike whenever she wishes.

It will be many years before Stephen Gower serves his sentence and is at liberty, and I sincerely hope that Isabel will be happily married long before then. Certainly Beverly's friend, Jim Randolph, is at the house a great deal, and she seems to enjoy being with him. She sleeps normally now, and takes a decided interest in the new dances (which I consider *most* objectionable), and this is natural and right, for, as her mother says, young hearts cannot ache very long at a time. But I cannot help believing that while Isabel will bring to her husband a very sincere affection and make him perfectly happy, her real love is hidden within the stone walls of a prison. And I know, too, that the man to whom it was given fully realizes that the first love of a girl is a priceless possession, and should be jealously guarded and protected. He will always remember that while to him was given the privilege of bringing to her a woman's sublime moment of happiness from him came also her first great sorrow, and that it was not a care-free girl who left Stony-Lonesome, but a woman who must live down a tragedy, and who will always have in her life a shadow of which she does not speak.

I know that Stephen Gower bitterly regrets what he has done, and I am sorry for him, but I wish we had never seen him, for even I, with a perfectly well regulated mind, cannot forget him.

John asked me yesterday if I had made any plans for the summer, and where I was going.

"Well," I said, "I don't know, but I can tell you one thing positively: I am *not* going to Stony-Lonesome."

MOBILIZING IVAN

THE STORY OF A RUSSIAN RECRUIT

BY T. UZZELL

"ONE may sometimes cheat a Jew," say the peasants of Kostroma, "but one can never escape being a soldier."

The certainty of having to do military service, eight years of it, hangs like a sword over the head of the Russian moujik. Recruiting and mobilizing are terrible words to him. For the Czar, his "little father," he has real affection; faith in Church and in God could not be more child-like and beautiful than his; but the pomp and circumstance of war and wounds and death find no response in his peaceful and bucolic soul. His country's wrongs he does not understand. "What's the use?" asks the moujik, when the golden robed priest intones the Emperor's call to arms.

Various ways of escaping the dreaded military service the peasant's slow wit has devised; poisonous herbs that temporarily, sometimes permanently, weaken the eyesight; harrowing vices voluntarily contracted; a trigger-finger or a hand chopped off—these expedients for insuring exemption have all been tried again and again, but rarely with success. Fate itself seems to conspire with the Czar's officers. An instance of this occurred in the little town of Kineshma, on the Volga River, province of Kostroma, where I was detained for several days en route to Nijni-Novgorod.

War threatened. The order had gone forth to mobilize all those that were due to muster at the next autumnal recruiting. This order in-

cluded those who would be twenty-one by the next recruiting day.

The town was aroused from its mid-summer apathy. A red, blue and white flag hung limply against the pole over the post office on the bluff. The moujiks left the fields and were herded on the steamboat landing, absorbed in discussion.

The heavy faces and bent forms of the idlers were in harmony with the enervating lifelessness of the air and clouds and water. The illimitable spaces of river and steppe seemed to swallow them up. Their measured speech and heavy gestures were in accord with the wide, coffee-colored Volga which eddied languorously by, bearing with it a prodigious log raft, from which a cooling zephyr wafted strains of the melancholy, monotonous songs of the Volga rivermen. The aromatic scent of freshly-cut hay sweetened the hot air; a peasant cart rattled over the rutty river path, the driver stretched out asleep on the hay, his face, mouth open, turned up to the sun.

At the center of the group sat the eleven young peasants who had been informed at the spring enrollment that they would be taken at the next muster. Their faces pictured the fear and consternation burdening their hearts. On sacks of coffee at the outskirts of the gathering long-bearded patriarchs sat and gazed stupidly at the straw lapti encasing their rag wrapped feet. All were splitting and eating sunflower seeds, the shells of which littered the mud-caked floor of the landing.

"Three more days, my fine fellows, and the officers from Peter'll be here to make gun meat of ye," drawled a crippled old soldier whom the others called Demitri Nikoli'tch. He and Vseva, the taleteller, had returned home, broken and impoverished, after spending their lives in the Czar's army.

"*Boshe moi*," he went on, "if our soldiers could only get the supplies voted them from the Government at Peter! But the money drops into the officers' pockets; the soldier never sees it. Once we walked a thousand versts from Samara over the Urals with our shoes hung on our gun barrels—we knew we'd get only one blessed pair that winter. On the snow in our naked feet, *vol!*"

"How is the shchee, father?" covertly inquired big Yakov, who was concerned about the quantity and quality of the cabbage soup furnished the troops.

"The shchee?" repeated Demitri, spitting sunflower shells through his beard. "Worms, my lad; worms in the soup and in the meat, and——"

"Silence, *batka*, you old fool!" cried several of the future soldiers, and silence fell over the dispirited group.

Yakov's mind labored. He persisted: "Why didn't you complain, *batka?*"

"Complain! God bless you, whole companies have been shot trying that." He gave a horrible little giggle. "Hearken to this, youngster: We stood up in battalions, *da*, whole battalions, twice a year, and when the great Colonel, shining with medals, rode grandly by and shouted, 'Everything satisfactory, comrades?' what did we do? We shouted back, loud and cheerful, 'Everything satisfactory, your High Excellency, and very glad indeed to serve you!'"

Again the silence was broken, this time by Ivan Kuldoon, a village char-

acter dubbed the Wizard, who swaggered down the gangplank, tipsy from a private celebration with Kozloff, the keeper of the Government traktir. He was round and almost a dwarf. His chubby hands were plunged deep in his breeches pockets; his heavy, deeply-creased boots swung along with ridiculously long strides, and his dull red shirt bobbed against the gray mud of the bank.

"Ay, ay! Lizards, donkeys, snakes! Getting drunk on the sun, eh?" tauntingly cried the Wizard. "If ever my boots get me to the other end of this—ach, here we are—brothers all! Come, rouse your old bones. Yakov, Sasha, Mishinka, *batka!* Come, a little dance!"

"Why is the lad so hilarious, *batka?*" asked a barge tower from Yaroslav.

The old soldier looked at his questioner, as if incredulous that any one should not know Ivan's cause for good spirits.

"The officers can't take him as a soldier, darling; the little devil is too short; he's half an inch too short."

He was truly a doughty little cock of the walk. Though the dwarf of the village, he was the most successful fighter; though scant of hair and handicapped with small, piggish eyes, a Tartar prominence to his cheek bones, and huge, yellow, ogreish teeth, he was acknowledged to be a tyrant over the hearts of the comely young women of Kineshma; and as for dancing the Trepak—well, it was a sight to see him performing there in the bright sun on the ferry landing. He skipped and reeled and squatted. He shook his fists at the brightly colored flag on the mast high on the bluff; he broke out in a parody on the national hymn—"God Slave Our Mighty Czar."

His stupid, stiff-jointed audience envied and admired him. The barbaric heartlessness of his boastings

never occurred to them; if God had spared him, why, luck was his; why shouldn't he rejoice? The province of Kostroma exudes fatalism.

But this admiration, this indifference, angered Ivan, and in a moment of exasperation he ended a pirouette of the Trepak by stamping viciously on the big boot of the giant, Yakov. Yakov got to his feet, shook two great, dusty fists at his tormenter and swore with crunching, consonantal effectiveness.

Now rumor had it that both Ivan and Yakov had been seen working in the fields near Varvara, the shy, buxom daughter of Michael, the harness maker, and both had visited the village matchmaker to prefer their claims. They were rivals.

"Noo, hearken to me, ye little pup," growled big Yakov, reaching down and gathering Ivan's red shirt in his fist. "God may leave ye here with the maidens and the crops while we are taken off as gun meat; if it be so, I'll give ye my fish scow and I'll put a tall candle—but, devil take it, I don't believe it. Ye've got to go with us. I won't—"

"Ye doubt it? Ye think I'll not get off?" shrilled the panting, perspiring Ivan, shaking himself loose and striding toward the gangplank. "Follow me, ye cattle, and I'll show ye! Forward! To the charge, soldiers! Ha, ha, ha!" And he staggered, roaring with derisive laughter, on to the muddy bank.

The whole crowd shuffled after the Napoleonic Ivan. He led them up the rotten stairs, through the stone-sprinkled streets of the sprawling town and into the odorous kitchen of his log house, which careened on the side of the hill. There the wondering peasants measured the mercurial dwarf; measured him against the door post three times with an arshine rule, counting solemnly, slowly, hoping each time that somehow he might

be found to measure up to the army regulation of thirty-four vershkie. Even big Yakov, the rival, went over the marks again and again, only to acquiesce in the general conclusion that Ivan the Wizard was too short.

At last Ivan jumped on a milking stool and demanded theatrically, "What's the proper height for a soldier, mates?"

The answer could have been given by the babes paddling in the alleys.

"Thirty-four vershkie," the peasants chorused in reply.

"Will they get me?" pursued Ivan, his arms still poised.

Yakov replied: "Ye're one-seventh of a vershok short, ye little devil; one-half inch. Ye better go put a dozen candles on the ikon. One-half inch!"

The young moujiks, defeated, convinced, shook their heads and stood silent, fumbling their caps. The Wizard would not be taken.

Well had he been called a wizard. From his babyhood he had managed to escape most of the burdens and sufferings that fall to the lot of the provincial peasant. In the first place he had benefited by being born a dwarf. He was ill and peevish as a child and was accounted unfit for driving a telaiga to market; he deceived the old priest into a belief in his fervent piety and so had him intercede with the starosta to let him play about the monastery and bask in the sun. He traded astutely with his gullible companions and robbed them; he planted oat crops and had his old grandmother reap them, and yet in spite of his arrogance he was envied, even admired by the other moujiks, loved by the girls (though they sometimes smiled at his short stature) and avoided and despaired of by the priests. Braggart, knave, always alert and in good spirits, he was a little Czar in his kingdom of Kineshma.

The moujiks shuffled out into the sunshine. Yakov lingered, sat down, rose up, propped his bulk dejectedly against the rude doorpost, and at last stammered:

"*Da*, thou'll marry Varvara, Ivan. It is certain now. I shall be away eight years. God give that it is best, merciful God."

He could go no further. Stolidly, miserably he raised his small, watering, blue eyes until they rested on the distant green valley, jewelled with the blue walls and golden cupolas of the Makarievskaya monastery. His throat moved convulsively as he shrugged his bowed shoulders and muttered the national, "Well, what's to be done?"

Then Yakov staggered away. Ivan grinned and called after him derisively, "No matter, my brave Yakovkin, no matter. Ye will become a general and will have no need for the ladies, ha, ha!"

Ivan the Wizard's betrothal to Varvara spread over Kineshma the next morning with the rising of the sun. He had spoken to the matchmaker, the matchmaker had drunk tea with the father; it was agreed to.

Yakov was nowhere to be seen.

The Wizard became the hero of the village. He went about telling everybody that he would never be a soldier on account of the half inch lacking to his height.

"But height is not everything, my friends," he would add; "a horse is taller than a man."

He gave up all show of work and began lingering about the streets. He conquered the village; he strode about with such a mighty air that grandames and village patriarchs, as they beheld him, muttered through their toothless gums: "*Bózhe moi*, ye wouldn't think he was too short! He looks as tall as the flagpole."

Two additional dessatines of the

common land belonging to the recruits were allowed the Wizard at a meeting of the mir, and he was elected to the post of starosta, which gave him the right to distribute the crops. Money given him by his friends for the purchase of candles to be burned before the ikon at Easter and Christmas he put in his pocket with a smile.

Fortunate Ivan!

On the eve of the second day the Wizard gave a great celebration. He spent half his summer earnings on that night's entertainment. Never was there such a night in the village of Kineshma. The little gostinaya and bedroom, and even the kitchen were filled with tables on which were heaped up smoked fish, black bread, bowls of cabbage and mushroom shchee, celery, leeks, baranka biscuits, dry porridge, melons, cranberry preserves, basins of curds, stacks of sweet cake, pots of boiled apples with their skins bursting off, steaming potatoes in a like condition, great stone jugs of brown, bitter kvass, tall, cracked pitchers of red cranberry wine and kulibak. A battered, steaming samovar on each table was convoyed by ranks of shining heavy glasses, and here and there little dishes and colored wooden ladles filled with cheap sweets.

The peasants arrived. Varvara, the bride, came decked out in a bright yellow sarafan with three strings of false pearls about her neck and a scarlet embroidered apron, all of which, except the apron, she would wear when she stood before the priest with Ivan.

The fat little host was mad with triumph and joy, until he noticed that all the guests had arrived but Yakov. Yakov not come! He for whose particular benefit the successful suitor had planned his festivity!

"Where is my little Yakov?" cried Ivan, mounting a stool.

"Da, where is Yakov?" repeated the peasants, glancing slyly and with watering mouths at the stacks of food.

Mishinka was sent out with two others to fetch him. "He can't be far away, mates," called Ivan, "for the officers come to-morrow."

Yakov was soon pushed sheepishly through the door. He sank resignedly on a bench.

"Ye'd scorn my bread and salt, eh?" glowered Ivan, his stubby arms akimbo. "Noo, sit ye opposite me while we feed. What a smiling mug, ho, ho! *Poidee!* Weren't hiding in the river, darling, eh?"

Laughter followed the jest, stools and benches clattered, the company sat down and the feasting began.

Ivan was an insolent and provocative host. He stalked among his guests as they ate and drank and laughed, clapped a big fellow on the shoulder here, snatched a kiss from a pretty lass there, sang snatches of river songs and kept every one at such a pitch of hilarity and indulgence that soon most of the men and not a few of the women tottered when finally they rose to their feet.

The tables were thrown out doors. Sasha with his two balalaika assistants was dragged in and the dancing began. They danced the peasant quadrille, the Volga skating step, the Yamshchik mazurka; there were solo exhibitions of the Trepak and the Cossack whirls and reels. Finally the Kamarinsky Moujik was begun. The men, thumbs in their belts, heads back, boots flying, careered about the flushed and laughing maidens; regular steps evolved into grotesque movements.

After each dance a keg of beer in a corner of the kitchen was besieged by the young men. Cheap papirosie were smoked. The lamps flickered low against the walls. The great stones of the oven in the kitch-

en, not yet cooled from the day's baking, made the log house like a steam bath; faces streamed with perspiration; not a window or door was opened; old babas fainted. The men rudely teased the maidens until the latter squealed with terror and enjoyment; some of them, enfeebled by exhausting labor in the fields, gave way and sank to the floor along the wall, by turns gasping and laughing idiotically. Ivan drank more, danced more, sang more than all the rest, and though Yakov attempted several times to dance with Varvara, his dwarfish rival tore her from him, swearing loudly.

And so the night wore on till dawn brought the village gendarmes to break up the party. When they rapped on the doors with their sword scabbards, shouting "Open, culprits, ho, there!" some of the men were already stretched out open-mouthed on the floor and several of the maidens were clasping each other for support.

A hush and a terror seemed to have fallen upon the dazed brains of those who were still on their feet. Ivan had mounted a small table by the oven, and, while hilariously waving the scarlet embroidered apron snatched from his bride, reeled and broke into the opening lines of a Russian folk song, the pathetic "Last Day."

The eleven fated moujiks listened, sobering immediately. Their heads dropped forward; they rubbed great, hard fists in their eyes and without a word staggered, some of them sobbing, through the rear door into the chill gray mist filled air of early dawn.

As they disappeared and the gendarmes entered the kitchen the Wizard threw up his fat arms in exultant laughter, slipped on the beer splashed edge of the tottering table, fell to the floor and struck the top

of his head against the corner of the stone oven. Whereupon he lay still. Varvara sank down beside him, laid her hands over his face and cried mournfully, "He has struck his head, his head! Help! *Boshe moi*, somebody help!"

The shrill, rolling bugle woke the sleeping revellers the same day at noon and the peasants who had been summoned to appear at the post office kontora to pass the mobilization tests pulled on their boots and caps and stumbled thither. Ivan, his hair still wet from applications of cold water and his head throbbing from the wound on his scalp, was among them; his eyes still twinkled and his mouth stretched over his protruding teeth in the same complacent smirk of contentment and triumph.

Ah, that blessed half inch! He remembered that.

The red, blue and white flag now fluttered briskly in the clear sunlight, but none of the young peasants raised his eye to behold it. Not a thrill of patriotism. The bright flag and the officers shining with gold braid and clanking silver spurs spelled for them slavery.

So occupied was Ivan with his injured head that the rough treatment of the officers angered him. They shoved him into a corner, stripped him, measured him and quizzed him, and to his unspeakable amazement ordered him into the back room with the other eleven recruits, who, it was now announced, were to leave at once for the front.

Ivan roused himself with difficulty. He couldn't think. The others were too depressed even to notice that he was among them. Then the

Wizard began to cry, to protest, to call out, to beat on the door into the kontora. The door was jerked open with an oath by the sergeant, who demanded to know what swine was squealing.

"There's a mistake, your Honor!" pleaded Ivan. "A mistake! You can't take me! I'm too——"

The door was slammed in his face.

The Wizard fell to the floor and kicked and screamed until once more the door was opened and he was dragged by the collar into the kontora and asked to tell his trouble.

"Did you get him right?" the officer whispered to the sergeant.

"I did, your Excellency," replied the sergeant, saluting.

"Better examine the dog again," said the officer, tapping the big, soiled book before him absentmindedly. "He might go crazy. Apparently he never expected to go. That's the way it always is with the accused cattle."

The Wizard, his eyes bloodshot and his fat cheeks smeared with perspiration, tears and dirt, whimpered. "I'm too short, your Excellency——"

"We'll soon see!" The sergeant seized the cringing peasant by the shoulders, slammed him up against the scale and dropped the sliding arm on the top of his head. Ivan cried out with pain and raised his hand involuntarily to his scalp.

"Thirty-four vershkie exactly, you fool! Get back into the pen where you belong!"

As the Wizard was being shoved toward the door his fingers, groping in the matted hair on the top of his head, discovered an ugly bump half an inch high. That half inch mobilized Ivan.

THE GOVERNOR'S STOCKING

A CHRISTMAS STORY

BY OWEN OLIVER

IT was six o'clock on Christmas Eve when Mr. and Mrs. John Hanson came from one end of Myrtle Road, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hanson came from the other. They quickened their paces in a laughing race for No. 17, and arrived at the doorstep in a bunch. Mrs. Fred Harrison (once Lily Hanson) ran to the door and opened it herself.

"Now we only want Fred to be ready for the Governor," she cried. "Come up and look at his room! Then I'll show you Baby, if she's awake."

"That's the first time Lil's baby ever came second!" Mrs. John remarked with her mischievous laugh; and Mrs. Tom nodded and smiled in her grave fashion.

"But this is the Governor's day, you know," Mrs. Fred explained. "I'm thinking more of the times when I was *his* baby. He always made Christmas such a fête for us; and you make just as much fuss over him when it's your year."

The "children" had entertained in turn since Lily married and "the Governor" gave up his house. "For fear a housekeeper might insist on marrying me," he told his family; but they know it was to save more money for them.

"Of course, dear," Mrs. John agreed. "But you can fuss to more purpose because you know his ways. I warn you I'm going to note down everything you do for him this year and do it next!"

"I think," said Mrs. Tom, "his principal way is to be pleased with

whatever we do to please him! But I shall copy you both next year!"

"I've copied both of you this year," Mrs. Fred said, leading the way upstairs, and throwing open the door of the Governor's room. "See that fluffy mat, Kate? I noticed that you had one between his bed and the door, and wondered that I didn't think of it when I was home. He never puts anything on his feet when he gets out for his morning tea. I've provided a little nest of drawers, like you had for him, Chris, to keep his letters in. What are you laughing at? . . . Oh! The stocking! That's for Santa Claus! I always hung up one for him from the time I was six. He used to pretend to be aggrieved because 'poor Dada' had no stockings, only socks. So I crept into his room Christmas Eve—it must have been twenty-two years ago—and tied one of my little stockings to his bed-post; and sixpennyworth of chocolate in it! I've done it every year since. When he came to you I sent him the stocking and the chocolate! I shall put that in to-night. Of course we'll give him his proper present in the morning, after you've all come round. Do be early, because it won't seem like Christmas Day to him till he has the whole family. And he'll be aching to give his presents to your kiddies. That's Fred come in! Just peep at Baby before you go down . . . Isn't it a shame she's asleep? You can laugh as much as you like; but I know *you'd* have said so about your first baby!"

"The first baby only comes once!" brother John observed with a grin; and brother Tom said that sounded like a quotation from the Governor. They were all quoting the Governor's sayings and laughing when they reached the bottom of the stairs. Then they observed that brother Fred looked very grave.

"Why, Freddie!" his wife exclaimed. "What a long face for Christmas Eve!"

She kissed him under the mistletoe, and looked into his eyes, holding the sides of his coat. The Hansons were a tall family, and she was her husband's height.

"Well," he admitted, "there's something in the evening paper I don't like. Let's go and sit down. Have a cigar, Jack? And you, Tom? Here are some chocolates for you ladies . . . Ye-es. It's a nasty bit of news. You know we tried to get the Governor to sell those oil shares of his a few months ago, and he wouldn't? Well, the thing's gone pop."

There was a horror-struck silence.

"Of course," brother John observed at length, "it wouldn't hurt him much, if he'd simply treat it as a loss of capital; but he's so keen to keep that intact to leave to us. He'll try to save it out of his income."

"Out of the part of his income that he spends on himself," Mrs. Tom bewailed.

"That isn't the biggest part," Mrs. John stated.

"He'd take it out of the capital before he'd take it out of what he gives us," brother Tom remarked. "He always says he'd rather make us comfortable by his life than by his death."

"He'll give us his usual checks to 'put us straight,'" Mrs. Fred cried, "and abandon his tour around the world; put off his retirement and go on working, most likely! The

tour will be just as good in a year or so, he'll say . . . It will be; but *he* won't be!"

"No," brother Fred agreed. "No. That's just it. He's so young for his age, and he'd enjoy the trip as much as anybody, if he went now; but in a few years—. One never knows."

"One never knows!" Brother John sighed. "We've been working him up to it for years."

"He ought to have something for himself out of his money," brother Tom stated.

"Yes," Tom's wife agreed. "If he would only take the loss out of what's coming to us, I shouldn't care."

"But he won't," John's wife asserted, "unless we persuade him. Couldn't you, John?"

Brother John shook his head.

"If any one could," he declared, "it's Lil. You see, she was home with him alone for several years after you charming ladies insisted on marrying us, and she got a bit of a hold over him; being an artful and coaxing young person."

Mrs. Fred shook her head.

"He'd just put me off with a jest," she insisted. "You know Dad's way. . . . Freddie, can't *you*? You're a lawyer, and have the way of arguing."

"Argument never availed me with you, young lady," Fred protested, "and I don't think it will be any use with the Governor. I can see only one way. I've been thinking about it all the way home. . . . You know how he shares out checks every Christmas—to put us straight," as Lily says. I'm afraid we've got rather used to relying on those checks! But couldn't we make out that we're better off this year, and don't need them?"

John and his wife looked at each other.

"*We* could," Mrs. Fred said; "but,

you see, we've only one baby, Fred; and she's a very little one! They have a lot of dear little children."

"I might do a little financing," Fred observed; "only a very little, I'm afraid."

"I think we'll have to try," John pronounced.

"Of course we must," his wife assented; and the others said the same.

"I'll tell you what," Mrs. Fred proposed. "If he insists on giving us the checks, he'll do it to-night, as he always does. Let's put them in his stocking, with a letter saying how much we all want him to have his trip; and that, now we are better off, there is nothing that could possibly give us the same pleasure as his allowing us to send him on the cruise that he has always wanted to have. I think he might give in to that. You see anything Santa-Clausy always appeals to him."

"Lil!" her husband cried. "I don't wonder that you always get over me!"

"I do it in the same way that I am trying to get over Father," she claimed: "by being very fond of you!"

"Why," cried Mrs. Tom, "I believe we all know that plan! . . . Really, I think we're rather a clever family; and an awfully nice one; but impecunious!"

"Horribly impecunious." Mrs. John made a wry face. "I'm willing enough to go without things for the dear old Governor; but I simply don't know if Jack and I *can* do it all at once. Can't we borrow a bit and pay back gradually, Mr. Lawyer?"

"Yes," the lawyer promised. "I'll arrange it all right. There's one thing about you people: I know jolly well that you will pay in the end. The family may be a bit improvident; but it's a sensible family; and when we've got to economize we'll do

it all right. Lil and I haven't so many calls as you people, so we must put a bit more into the pot."

"Yes," his wife agreed.

"No, no!" the others denied.

They argued the matter till a cab stopped at the door.

"The Governor!" they all shouted, and rushed to greet him. The ladies hugged him and the men shook his hands nearly off. The six escorted him to his room, all carrying some of his numerous parcels. Then (after he had peeped at the chubby baby sleeping with her fat fist half in her mouth) they escorted him down again, and formed a ring round him in the drawing-room.

He looked down upon them all with satisfaction. He was a very tall man, a couple of inches above his big sons, and four or five inches above his daughter and her husband. His little daughters-in-law barely reached his shoulder. He generally lifted them up when he kissed them. He looked, and was, a fine, strong, hearty man. He smiled, as if no oil shares ever were; but an evening paper was sticking out of his pocket, and every one knew that he always read the financial news first.

"Well, kids," he said, "how's the world using you all?"

"Pretty gaily," John said cheerfully. "Kate and I have had a good year, Governor; no deficit this time. It's rather a good job, eh? You'll be wanting lots of spare cash for that trip. I can remember you planning it out nearly thirty years ago. Well, it's coming off now."

"Some day," the Governor agreed; "some day. I've been thinking over the retirement question; and I don't feel like giving up just yet. There are several important changes going on, and though I don't say that any man is indispensable, still, there are times when——"

"Now, Daddy," Mrs. Fred inter-

rupted, "I won't listen to such nonsense! You're to have that trip while you're still a youth—you are, you know! Don't you remember when you called me 'young Lil!' I used to call you 'young Father!' . . . It's such a fine chance next year, because Fred and I haven't any deficit on the budget either, for once."

"We haven't one either," Tom observed; "nothing that we can't easily make up, anyhow. The business has made a grand spurt lately."

"Capital!" the Governor cried heartily. "Capital! I've always looked forward to a year when you could all buy yourselves some trifles with those little checks, instead of wiping off deficits."

"You give us plenty of trifles," Mrs. John protested. "Big trifles, dear. There is no need for checks, too."

"We have always looked forward to relieving you of wiping off deficits, Daddy," Mrs. Tom told him.

"And you must let us have our pleasure this time," Mrs. Fred begged, "and retire while you are still quite young—you always said you would—and have your trip."

The Governor laughed and shook his head.

"Next year," he said, "I expect you'll all have surpluses! It might run to a family tour, if we wait."

. . . Work is better fun than play, kids. I'll have another year of it, anyway. As to the little checks—you must humor your young father this time. It wouldn't seem a proper Christmas if I did less for you.

. . . It's no use squeezing my arm, young Lil! I'm going to see those checks turn into gorgeous apparel. Three lady Solomons in all their glory, eh? . . . By the way, I've got the checks ready, all six of them. . . . Do you know, my dears, it's a great comfort to be

able to make out *sir* with perfect satisfaction. I always thought I had just the right three to give presents to; but I never thought they'd add exactly the right three as they have! I believe they must have selected to please 'the Governor!' . . . Here you are, my dears. . . . Jack. . . . Kate. . . . Tom. . . . Chris. . . . Fred. . . . Lil. . . . A happy Christmas to you all!"

They thanked him all together, and then one by one in much the same terms. The ladies kissed him and said he was the dearest "young father" that ever was, but they *did* so want him to have his trip. The men shook his hand and said "A happy Christmas, sir! But really you ought to retire now and enjoy yourself." He told them all that he was going to prove his youth by a little more work. "I can always come back to the tour," he said, "but, once I become an idle old vagabond, I shall never go back to work again. Besides, we can have a short cruise in the summer holidays. I've rather a good idea for that. What do you say to a wherry on the Broads, and take all the kids? We could have a small yacht for a tender."

"All the babies!" Mrs. John laughed. "You *young* father! You are the most courageous of us all!"

"Well," he admitted, "I don't believe I lack courage!"

His courage, they told one another afterwards, was wonderful! Nobody would dream that he had suffered such a heavy loss; and, as he evidently did not wish them to be worried about it, they would pretend that they were ignorant of the fact to-night; but they *couldn't* take the money he had saved for his trip—they reckoned that the checks were just about equal to this—and spend it on themselves; and if he rebelled against their returning it in the stock-

ing, the whole family would "have it out" with him.

"I shall say, 'You've always taught us not to be selfish,'" Mrs. Fred stated, "'and we shall be happier for doing something for you; and you can't stop your boys and girls from doing what is right, Dad.'"

"Lil has hit on the right line as usual," John asserted; and the rest agreed. So it was arranged; and when John and John's wife had gone one way, and Tom and Tom's wife the other, and the Governor and Fred were smoking a final pipe over the fire, Mrs. Fred put the six checks and a little packet of chocolate into the slim stocking that hung upon the Governor's bed-post. She wiped her eyes as she reread her letter before placing it on top. She had taken the fancy to write it like a little girl of six, and as nearly as she could remember on the lines of the letter that she had written twenty-two years ago; and when she went to her room she knelt beside the baby's bed for a few minutes.

"Please, God," she prayed, "make me as good to her as my father was to me!"

The Governor's keen eyes flickered, too, when he stood and surveyed the stocking before he turned down the gas. He must not look inside till the morning, he knew. A coaxing little fair-haired girl had pledged him to that the very first year; and many times after he had made the same promise to a fair-haired girl who grew bigger and bigger. . . . Now she was a gracious, fair-haired woman; to her father, the loveliest of women.

"The kids have put a lot in my stocking," he muttered; "a lot in my stocking! . . . What a tiny one it used to be! . . . All such good children . . . and their wives and husbands. . . . Little Lil was the one who understood me

best . . . and didn't. She credited me with too much. But they all do. . . . Thank God for my children!"

He turned down the gas, and jumped into bed; and as he dozed he gave thanks to God again.

"Little Lil's stocking!" he muttered. "Little Lil's stocking!"

Then he slept till Lily herself brought his morning tea; wished him a merry Christmas and hugged him.

"I suppose," he suggested—he always teased—"the Young Princess"—he always nicknamed every one, and that was his name for Lily's baby—"has been restive?"

"My daughter doesn't behave like that," Lily assured him.

"Then, what makes you so wide-awake, old sleepyhead? . . . Come! I can see you want to say something!"

"Well, I do . . . There's a letter in your stocking about something. . . . I want you not to look in the stocking till they're all here."

"Ump-p-ph!" The Governor smiled slowly. He had little doubt that the letter related to retirement from business and a trip round the world! He had also little doubt about sticking to his recent resolution. He had no doubt at all that he could cope with the arguments of the whole family more easily than with the coaxing of Lily; his one girl child, and for many years the childish mistress of his house. (Her mother died when Lily was four.) He smiled to think of her skill in dealing with him. His smile broadened at the thought that for once she had made an error in tactics.

"The investigation of the stocking shall be made a public ceremony," he promised.

He carried it downstairs with him and hung it up on the gas-fitting in the dining-room; and there it re-

mained till the rest of the family had arrived, and his presents had been distributed, and the presents which they had for him received, and the grandchildren had been taken to the spare room to romp and play with their toys. Then the grown-ups gathered in the dining-room. They gave the Governor an armchair at the end of the table, and the rest sat along the sides; and Fred handed him Lily's stocking.

"We'd like you to understand, sir," he said, "that there's a deal of—of heart in what's inside."

The Governor gave a little nod, and put his hand in the stocking and drew out the contents. He smiled imperturbably when he saw the letter; but his face changed when he found the checks. It was very hard to surprise the Governor; but this time he was obviously surprised.

However, he made no remark, but read the letter to the end; pulled his mustache thoughtfully; read the letter slowly again. He laid it down on the table in front of him and sat very still with his eyes fixed on it. His hand lay on the table, and Lily put her white hand on his.

"Thank you, my dears," he said at last. "Thank you very much. I understand what you think about my retirement and the trip—I'll argue that out with you presently—but I don't understand why you think that either is a question solely of money."

He looked round at the family in turn, and they looked at one another. Finally they all looked at Lily, the youngest by several years. It was not that any one shirked an unpleasant task. They considered that she had the greatest influence over the Governor.

She drew a deep breath, and took his hand between both of hers.

"We saw about the oil shares in the paper, Daddy darling," she said softly. "We knew that you'd try to

make the loss fall on yourself, and not on us. . . . We'd rather it fell on us, because . . . you brought us up like that, don't you see, dear?"

The tears came running down her face. Her father and her husband offered their handkerchiefs simultaneously. She turned her face to one and then to the other, and laughed unsteadily.

"Poor Dada has no stocking for himself," she said, "only—only six children who—who love him!"

"And whom he loves," the Governor said. "God bless you, my dears! I've had a full stocking these many years. . . . Fuller and fuller. Some dear little grandchildren. . . . It's a wonderful stocking this year! Now to answer your letter. The question of the retirement isn't financial. I like my work. I am better at work. It keeps me young; that and my children. I can't give it up yet. It would be writing myself down old, don't you see, my dears? A time will come . . . well, it hasn't come yet. I am able still to work *for you*. Othello's occupation! . . . I will have the trip some day. The money's saved for it, quite apart from my capital, and from these checks. As to the capital—I sold those oil shares three months ago. *That's* all right."

Five voices gave faint cries of delight. Lily was still wiping her eyes and made no sound.

"As to your not needing the checks," the Governor continued, "I half believed you last night; and now I wholly don't! I realize how much—how very much heart you have put in my stocking. I accept the gift to use for myself in the way that will give me most joy . . . the joy of helping you, my dears . . . out of 'the Governor's stocking'!"

He handed the checks round silently, and they took them silently,

except Lily. She flung her arms round him and cried.

"You've made it up!" she charged him. "About the shares! To get us to take the money!"

The Governor hugged her close for a moment. Then he laughed.

"I won't call you a silly," he told her, "because it's what I should have done unblushingly, if it had been necessary; but, as a matter of fact, I did sell those shares. I'll show you the transaction in my bank pass-book. It's in my bag upstairs."

He kissed her and strode toward the door; came back and picked up the stocking; folded it carefully and thrust it into his pocket.

"That makes twenty-three!" he remarked. His voice choked, and he turned away suddenly. The family choked too; and the women laid their heads upon their husbands' shoulders. They seemed to see the dainty stockings laid away somewhere; twenty-three; and beginning with some that were very small. . . . Little stockings filled with love!

SELF-CONFIDENT YOUTH

BY FLORENCE EARLE COATES

THE earth is mine and its myriad flowers,
And the stars are mine: I shall count them all;
As I hasten on, with expanding powers,
No cloud-capped peak shall my strength appal.

I will measure my might 'gainst the might of Ocean,
In ships of my building, its wastes will dare;
I will learn of the swallow its swift-winged motion,
And ride, as it rides, through the fields of Air! . . .

I marvel my fathers have been contented
To live and to labor in ways time-worn:
That to Fate's denials they e'er consented,
Solaced by trifles my soul would scorn!

For the tired old world I will write a story
That none of her children has told before:
A tale of adventure and love, whose glory
Shall glow in her annals forevermore.

To the depths, to the heights I am called to inherit,
I will climb, will descend, without fear of fall,
In the perilous joy of a dauntless spirit
That nothing shall have if it have not All!

THE INDIAN AS A CITIZEN

BY CHARLES A. EASTMAN, M.D. (OHIYESA.)

Author of "Indian Boyhood," "Old Indian Days," etc.

WE have often-times taken note of the reluctance of the American Indian to develop an organized community life, although few appreciate his reasons for preferring a simpler social ideal. From the standpoint of practical value as well as of sentiment, he has always been well content with his own customs and philosophy. Nevertheless, after due protest and resistance, he has accepted the situation; and, having accepted it, he is found to be easily governed by civilized law and usages. It has been demonstrated more than once that he is capable of sustaining a high moral and social standard, when placed under wise guidance and at the same time protected from the barbarians of civilization.

MODEL INDIAN COMMUNITIES

About the middle of the last century, William Duncan, an Englishman, came among a band of Alaskan natives and they formed a strong mutual attachment. The friendship of these simple people was not misplaced, and Mr. Duncan did not misuse it for his own advantage, as is too apt to be the case with a white man. He adapted himself to their temperament and sense of natural justice, but gradually led them to prefer civilized habits and industries, and finally to accept the character of Christ as their standard. He used the forms of the Church of England, but modified them as good sense dictated.

They worked together in good faith for a generation; and as a result there was founded the Christian

community of Metlakatla, Alaska; almost an ideal little republic, so long as no self-seeking Anglo-Saxon interfered with its workings. The Indians became carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, gardeners, as well as better fishermen. They established a sawmill and a salmon cannery. They built houses and boats, and finally a steamboat, which was run by one of their number. Mr. Duncan never allowed strong drink to enter the colony; he was the only white man among a thousand Indians, and so strong was their faith in him that he was accepted as their leader both practically and spiritually. He devoted his whole life to them, and never married. Some of the young people he sent away to the States to school; among them Edward Marsden, a many-sided man, who is not only a graduate of a small college in Ohio and of a theological seminary, but has some knowledge of law and medicine, and is an able seaman and an efficient machinist.

The Metlakatlans are not technically citizens, although discharging many civic duties. In 1887 they were compelled to leave their island on account of difficulties with the local church authorities, who were not broad enough to admit the simple sufficiency of Mr. Duncan's lay ministrations. He removed with his people to another island, where they are now living under the protection of the United States flag. In view of the lessons of history, they are likely to undergo a severe trial and considerable demoralization as soon as they mingle freely with the surround-

ing whites. They have so far developed and enjoyed much of what is best in civilization without its evils and temptations; and whenever one of them does infringe upon their simple but exacting code, he is summarily dealt with.

Here is another illustration. In 1869, those Sioux who had been for three years confined in a military prison on account of the outbreak of 1862, were placed upon a small reservation at Santee, Neb. My father was among them. He had thought much, and concluded that reservation life meant practically life imprisonment and death to manhood. He also saw that our wild life was almost at an end. Therefore he resolved to grasp the only chance remaining to the red man—namely, to plunge boldly into the white man's life, and swim, or die.

With twenty-five or thirty fellow-tribesmen who were of like mind with himself, he set out for the Big Sioux River to take up a homestead like a white man. Far from urging it, government officials disapproved and discouraged this brave undertaking. Nevertheless, the Indians selected a choice location, forty miles above what is now the beautiful little city of Sioux Falls, S. Dak., and here they established the first Sioux citizen community. The post-office was named Flandreau, and formed the nucleus of what is now a large and flourishing town. Remember, this was six years before Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse made their last stand on the Little Big Horn, where they wiped out General Custer's command, the Seventh Cavalry.

This remarkable Indian colony became known far and wide. The Sioux were *bona fide* homesteaders and met all the requirements of the law. They occupied thirty miles of the finest bottom lands with their timber, and except for these wooded

river bottoms, the country is all treeless prairie. They were all Presbyterians and devout churchgoers. Rev. John P. Williamson was their much-loved missionary, and their church was served for many years by a native pastor—my brother, Rev. John Eastman. Nearly all built good homes. Mr. Williamson says, and Moody County records corroborate the statement, that for twenty years there was not a single crime or misdemeanor recorded against one of these Indians.

As the Big Sioux valley is noted for its fertility, it was not long before the rest of the land was taken up by white farmers. To them the Indians proved good neighbors. It is told of them that, during the hard years from 1873 to 1875, when drought and grasshoppers afflicted the land, they organized a relief society for the benefit of their poorer white neighbors, and in many instances furnished them with cordwood, as well as seed-corn and potatoes.

For years the Flandreau Sioux controlled the politics of Moody County, and although after the district had become more thickly settled they lost their numerical preponderance, they still wielded much influence in years when the parties were pretty equally divided. As late as 1898, they held the balance of power, and were accordingly treated with respectful consideration.

From this little Indian community more than one earnest youth has gone forth to work for race and country in a wider field. My father brought me there from wild life in Canada in 1872, and after two years in the mission day school he sent me away to master the secret of the white man's power. Only a few years earlier, he himself had been a wild Sioux warrior, whose ambitions ran wholly along the traditional lines

of his people. Who can say that civilization is beyond the reach of the untutored primitive man in a single generation? It did not take my father two thousand years, or ten years, to grasp its essential features; and although he never went to school a day in his life, he was a broad-minded and self-respecting citizen. It took me about fifteen years to prepare to enter it on the plane of a professional man, and I have stayed with it ever since.

It is noticeable that when the Flandreaus consented to re-enter their names on the tribal rolls in order to regain their inheritance, they fell into the claws of the professional politicians, and a degree of demoralization set in. Yet, during the early period of free initiative and self-development, some of the best of their youth had gone out and are now lost in the world at large, in the sense that they are wholly separated from their former life, and are contributing their mite to the common good. Those who remain, as well as other bands of citizen Sioux with whom I am acquainted, are becoming more and more completely identified with the general farming population of Nebraska and the Dakotas.

THE LEGAL STATUS OF INDIANS

The door to American citizenship has been open to the Indian in general only since the passage of the Dawes Severalty Act, in 1887. Before that date, his status was variously defined as that of a member of an independent foreign nation, of a "domestic dependent nation," as a ward of the government, or, as some one has wittily said, a "perpetual inhabitant with diminutive rights." The Dawes Act conferred upon those who accepted allotments of land in severalty the protection of the courts and all the rights of citizenship, including the suffrage. It also pro-

vided that the land thus patented to the individual Indian could not be alienated nor was it taxable for a period of twenty-five years from the date of allotment.

Of the 330,000 Indians in the United States, considerably more than half have now been allotted land, and 70,000 hold patents in fee. The latest report of the Indian Bureau gives the total number of Indian citizens at about 75,000. Those still living on communal land are being allotted individual holdings at the rate of about 5,000 a year. The question of taxation of allotments has been a vexed one. Some Indians have hesitated to accept full citizenship because of fear of taxation; while white men living in the vicinity of large Indian holdings have naturally objected to shouldering the entire burden. Yet, as the last census shows 73 per cent of all the Indians in this country as taxed and counted toward the population of their Congressional districts, it appears that taxed or taxable Indians are not necessarily citizens, though they must be considered, in the words of Professor F. A. McKenzie, who compiled the Indian census, as at least "potential citizens."

The so-called "Burke Bill" (1906), provides that Indians allotted land after that date should not be declared citizens until after the expiration of the twenty-five-year trust period. This act has served no particular purpose except to confuse further the status of the Indian. The "Carter Code Bill," now pending in Congress, provides for a commission of experts to codify existing statutes and define this status clearly, and has been strongly endorsed by the Society of American Indians and the Indian Rights Association. It ought to be made law.

There is a special law under which an Indian may apply to be freed from

national guardianship by proving his ability to manage his own affairs. If his application is approved by the Interior Department, he may then rent or sell his property at will. About 500 such applications were approved during the fiscal year, 1912-13.

The Pueblos and a few other Indians are or may become citizens under special treaty stipulations. The 5,000 New York Indians, on the other hand, although among those longest in contact with civilization, because of state treaties and the claims of the Ogden Land Company still hold their lands in common and are morally and socially more or less undeveloped. It is likely that the United States will eventually pay the company's claim of \$200,000.00 in order to free these people. A few of them are well educated and have attained citizenship as individuals by separating themselves from their tribes. Professor McKenzie, who has deeply studied the situation for years, proposes a scheme of progressive advance toward full citizenship, each step to be accompanied by decreasing paternal control, as, for instance: 1. Tribal ward; 2. Allotted ward; 3. Citizen ward; 4. Full citizen.

INDIANS AS POLITICIANS

In almost every state there are some Indian voters, and in South Dakota and Oklahoma there are counties officered and controlled by Indian citizens. It is interesting to note that the citizen Indian is no ignorant or indifferent voter. If he learns and masters anything at all, it is the politics of his county and state. It is a matter of long experience with him, as he has been handled by politicians ever since he entered the reservation, and there is not a political trick that he cannot understand. He is a ready student

of human nature, and usually a correct observer. I am sorry to say that the tendency of the new generation is to be diplomats of a lower type, quick and smart, but not always sound. At present, like any crude or partially developed people, politics is their hobby.

Yet there remains a sprinkling of the old Indian type, which is strongly averse to all unfair or underhanded methods; and there are a few of the younger men who combine the best in both standards, and refuse to look upon the new civilization as a great grab-bag. It is not strange that the majority are influenced by the prevailing currents of American life. Before they understood the deeper underlying principles of organized society, they had seen what they naturally held to be high official duties and responsibilities ruthlessly bartered and trafficked with before their eyes. They did not realize that this was a period of individual graft and misuse of office, for which true civilization was not responsible.

Among the thinking and advanced class of Indians there is, after all, no real bitterness or pessimistic feeling. It has long been apparent to us that absolute distinctions cannot be maintained under the American flag. Yet we think each race should be allowed to retain its own religion and racial codes as far as is compatible with the public good, and should enter the body politic of its own free will, and not under compulsion. This has not been the case with the native American. Everything he stood for was labelled "heathen," "savage," and the devil's own; and he was forced to accept modern civilization *in toto* against his original views and wishes. The material in him and the method of his reconstruction have made him what he is. He has defied all the theories of the ethnologists. If any

one can show me a fair percentage of useful men and women coming out of the jail or poor-house, I will undertake to show him a larger percentage of useful citizens, graduating from the pauperizing and demoralizing agency system.

There was no real chance for the average man of my race until the last thirty-five years; and even during that time, he has been under the unholy rule of the political boss and "little Czar" of the Indian agency, from whose control he is not even yet entirely free. You are suffering from a civic disease, and we are affected by it. When you are cured, and not until then, we may hope to be thoroughly well men.

INHERITANCE AND OTHER FRAUDS

Here is another point of attack for the men who continually hover about the Indian like vultures above a sick or helpless man—the law providing that the allotments of deceased Indians may be sold for the benefit of their legal heirs, even though the time limit of twenty-five years protected title may not have expired. I consider the law a just one, but the work of determining the heirs is complicated and difficult. It is only recently that Congress has appropriated \$50,000.00 for this purpose, although 40,000 inheritance cases are now pending, and much fraud has already been accomplished. Representative Burke has shown that the bulk of the minors and incompetent Indians in Oklahoma have been swindled out of their property by dishonest administrators and guardians. Honorable Warren K. Moorehead, of the United States Board of Indian Commissioners, who investigated the situation in that State, intimates that as many as 21,000 such cases exist there. He says the handling of estates in Oklahoma costs often from 30 to 90 per cent,

whereas the average rate in thirty states is 3 per cent. "Why do not our laws prevent the robbing of Indians? Because they are not enforced," says Mr. Moorehead, who also investigated White Earth, Minn., a few years ago, and uncovered a scandal of large proportions, relating to the theft of over 200,000 acres of land as a result of suddenly removing all restrictions on the lands of mixed bloods at that agency, many of whom were incompetent to manage their own affairs.

Much of this graft might readily be stopped, and the ignorant Indian protected, were it not for the fact that the relationship between the shysters and certain officials is very intimate and friendly. When complaint is made, big envelopes with "U. S." printed in the corner pass back and forth—and that is too often the end of it! The Sioux call the United States Indian inspectors, who are supposed to discover and report abuses, "Big Cats"; but an old chief once said to me: "They ought rather to be called prairie owls, who are blind in the day time and have rattlesnakes for their bed-fellows!"

Under President Roosevelt, and at the suggestion of Dr. George Bird Grinnell and Hamlin Garland, a definite attempt was made to systematize the Indian nomenclature. The Indian in his native state bears no surname, and as his wife and children figure under entirely different names from that of the head of the family, the law has been unnecessarily embarrassed. I received a special appointment to revise the allotment rolls of the Sioux nation. It was my duty to group the various members of one family under a permanent name, selected for its euphony and appropriateness from among the various cognomens in use among them, of course, suppressing mistranslations and grotesque or

coarse nicknames calculated to embarrass the educated Indian. My instructions were that the original native name was to be given the preference, if it were short enough and easily pronounced by Americans. If not, a translation or abbreviation might be used, while retaining as much as possible of the distinctive racial flavor. No English surname might be arbitrarily given, but such as were already well established might be retained if the owner so desired. Many such had been unwisely given to children by teachers and missionaries, and in one family I found a George Washington, a Daniel Webster, and a Patrick Henry! The task was quite complicated and there were many doubts and suspicions to overcome, as some feared lest it should be another trick to change the Indian's name after he had been allotted, and so defraud him safely. During the seven years spent in this work, I came upon many cases of inheritance frauds. In the face of what appear to be iron-clad rules and endless red tape, it is a problem how these things can happen, without the knowledge of responsible officials!

THE INDIAN AS HIS OWN ATTORNEY

Some years since, an interesting case came up at Standing Rock Agency, N. Dak., which illustrates the ability of the modern Indian to manage his own affairs when he is permitted to do so. It was proposed to lease nearly the whole reservation, the occupied as well as the unoccupied portion, to two cattle companies; but in order to be legal, the consent of the Indians was necessary. An effort was made to secure their signatures, and interested parties had nearly the requisite two-thirds of them fooled, when a mixed-blood by the name of Louis Primeau learned of the game, and

brought it to the attention of the people.

They made a strong and intelligent resistance; asked for a hearing in Washington, and sent on a delegation to present their case. Immediately the agent got up a rival delegation of "good Indians," fed and clothed for the occasion, to contradict the first and declare that the people were willing to sign, all save the "kickers and trouble-makers."

My brother, the Rev. John Eastman, and I were in Washington at the time. The Indian delegation who protested against the leases were given no show at all before the Department, because it appeared that influential Western Senators were upholding the interests of the cattle companies. Primeau came to my brother for help; and we finally secured a hearing before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

It happened to be a Democratic Senate, although a Republican President was in office, and the head of that committee was Senator Stewart of Nevada. Before him the braves fought their unequal battle to a finish. They had their credentials and the minutes of the meeting at which they had been elected, and they stated clearly their people's reasons for opposing the leases—reasons which were sound on the face of them. They also declared that the Indian Commissioner had sent a telegram to their agent, saying that if they would not sign, they would be ignored by the Department, and the leases approved without their consent, although such consent was required both by treaty and statute.

It was immediately denied by the other side that any such telegram had been sent, upon which the wily Sioux played their trump card. They produced a certified copy of the dispatch which they had obtained from the operator, and publicly

handed this piece of evidence to Senator Stewart.

The Indians also consulted Judge Springer of Illinois, who, after reviewing their case, said that they could serve an injunction on both the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner, in the District of Columbia. This they did. The officials asked for thirty days; and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs personally hastened to Standing Rock, where he gave the red men a good scolding for their audacity, at the same time telling them that no lease had been made, or would be made.

President Roosevelt then sent Dr. Grinnell, a well-known friend of the Indian, to make an independent investigation. Dr. Grinnell reported that the Walker lease was entirely opposed to the Indians' interests, and that it would not only be unwise, but wrong, to approve it. The Lemmon lease of the unoccupied portion of the reservation was afterwards executed with the Indians' consent.

There are innumerable instances of this sort, but this one is worthy of mention because of the spirit and success with which the Indians conducted their own case. Very often their property is dissipated in spite of the fact that there are men among them who fully grasp the situation. These men protest, but it is of no use. They are denounced as "insubordinate," "disturbers of the peace," and worthless prevaricators. Here is where national honor and the rights of a dependent people are sacrificed to the politicians. When we consider that the Indian still

owns over 70,000,000 acres of land, and trust funds stated at \$48,000,000.00, the proceeds of ceded territory, it may be seen that this immense estate largely in the hands of "wards" and illiterate persons presents a very serious problem.

It has come to be more and more the case that the Indian, so long and so oppressively paternalized, is allowed to take a hand in his own development. This is as it should be. Many theories have been advanced concerning him; but I think we all agree that he has outgrown the present method, which now seems to retard his progress. Yet the old machinery continues to exist in cumbersome and more or less inefficient form. It is a question whether it really does much more good than harm; but it seems clear that some of the tribes still need intelligent and honest guardianship. To my mind, this machinery might be adjusted more nearly to the requirements of the present-day Indian.

Professor Moorhead has suggested the plan of putting the Indian Bureau under a commission of several men, to be appointed for long terms or for life, free from political considerations. I can scarcely conceive of wholly non-partisan appointments in this age, but length of service would be a great advantage, and it does seem to me that this experiment would be worth trying. Such a commission should have full authority to deal with all Indian matters without reference to any other department. I would add that one-half of its members might well be of Indian blood.



MISS KIMPTON'S BONES

by Ellis Parker Butler
Author of "Pigs is Pigs" etc.

UNTIL the affair of the bones I think Miss Kimpton's greatest worry was that she might be getting horse meat after all. Probably, considering length of time, the horse-meat worry was the greater of the two great worries she had in Paris, but the bones worry was the more intense. She admitted, herself, that it "flustered" her. I should say it did fluster her! I am going to tell you about it here and now, and if you don't like this sort of tale—but, of course, you can't tell until you read it.

To most of us Paris is a large city made provokingly delightful by the habit of the inhabitants of speaking a language other than our own. We pick up a word of the strange language here, and a word there, and presently—if we stop in Paris long enough—we are able to ask for, and get, anything we may want except really edible oysters. I should describe the French oyster as a small piece of tripe that has stood too long in a copper dish. The average American woman, given an apartment in Paris, will, at the end of six months, have mastered the French language so well that she can do all her shopping and marketing in French, with only an occasional error such as having the grocer send home a potted eel when she asked for an "if you please, a rendering of the account of the last month."

At the end of six months the Paris-visiting American has all the atmospheric words at her tongue's end. I need not say that by atmospheric I mean the words that give her speech an atmosphere of easy-going familiarity with things Parisian. She instinctively calls the policeman a *shawn-darm*, she travels by *maytro* instead of by subway, the top of the 'bus is the *impeeryal*, the postman is the *ah-zhond*, and all that sort of business. It is not affectation—it comes naturally. Even when speaking English she uses a hundred of these words. And so do mere males. So far as I have had facilities for judging the matter Miss Kimpton and I are the only two Americans to have broken the rule. As for myself, I have forgotten just enough high school German to always think of the German word for a thing when I need the French one, and my French is consequently rather second-hand, or once removed, from the English. I learned my French that way. Mrs. What-ever-my-name-is would say, "Now, what is the French word for horse?" "Horse? Horse? The German for it is *pferd*—yes—now, what is the French for horse? *Pferd*, *pferd*, *pferd*! Huh, I ought to know what the French for horse is! Horse—*pferd*—Well, that's funny!" Then Mrs. What-ever-my-name-is would look up horse in the French-German

dictionary. "Of course!" she would say, "it's *cheval*." "Yes," I would say, "*cheval*. *Pferd—cheval*! I must remember that. I may want to say horse sometime. *Pferd—cheval*."

Very often, after that, I could remember what the French for horse was, only I would have to think first what the German for horse was, and then translate the German horse into a French horse. I learned all my French like that, but as a rule it took me so long to change from an American horse to a German horse and then to a French horse that the conversation would have me distanced before I got started, and by the time I was French-horsed and ready to say what I had to say the conversation would have passed on to Futurist Art or Miss Kimpton's doughnuts, and when I began talking horse everyone would look at me with surprise. To interject a "Wee, la cheval de la cochair sont yune bong cheval" (that's the sort of French I speak) into the midst of a conversation that had shifted to doughnuts would have brought suspicions of insanity upon any other man. Luckily my friends only thought I was trying to be humorous. They would step aside and say in a low voice, "Well, maybe that's funny, but I can't see it. I think he has been over-rated."

When I commenced the above paragraph I had intended it to end with a reference to Miss Kimpton, but the construction work seems to have slipped a cog. What I meant to lead up to was that, no matter how bad my French was, Miss Kimpton's was no better. At the end of ten years in Paris she had just two words of French—*low* and *show*, and she always used them in combination, thus: *low show*. A friend of mine once said that when an American man and wife went to

Paris the first thing they united their voices to call for was "low show," the man meaning a cabaret entertainment and the woman meaning hot water. When Miss Kimpton said *low show* she meant (if you will permit me to translate in my usual manner) *l'eau chaud*, which in German is *heiss wasser*, which in English is hot water. I cannot believe that Miss Kimpton even imagined there were low shows in Paris, or anywhere else, that any American would be so degraded as to attend. Miss Kimpton was so thoroughly Middle West American that I doubt if she could have translated into an American meaning a picture in a French comic paper. Through all the atmosphere of Paris naughtiness—and it is rather guttery—she passed without catching a whiff. At the same time she was dreadfully and tremulously afraid of it. This may seem paradoxical, but it is not. She was like a person passing through a wood populated with ghosts, neither hearing their groans, seeing their luminosity, nor smelling their moldiness, and yet on edge with fear of ghosts all the while. She knew there were Paris ghosts, and she was afraid of them, but she would not have known one if she had seen it.

So Miss Kimpton was afraid of Paris. Her own little route around the Boulevard Raspail and the Avenue Edgar Quinet and the Rue Boissonade she knew as well as she had ever known Main Street back home. Her route to the Bon Marche and to the Louvre (shop, not gallery) gave her no qualms. She had tried them. They were safe. No one abducted you there, no gay lady models cut capers. The street cars ran, the shops sold goods, people went about their business. She felt at home in those streets. But if, as she passed along her usual routes, she glanced

down a deadly respectable side street, she shivered with dread. *Her* Paris was right and proper and safe because she knew it so well—any street or avenue she did not know was "Paris." And she was afraid of Paris and France and the French. Frightfully afraid.

Miss Kimpton was as much out of place in Paris as a pink satin parasol in the crater of Vesuvius. She was a dear, dainty, mildly exclamatory little lady of the age when the last remnant of matrimonial hope has given place to a blessed contentment. It is easier to imagine her fluttering from the kitchen to the parlor of a Middle Western home, highly agitated over the problem of whether the new minister prefers black or green tea with his cake, than to imagine her trotting about Paris streets, and yet she is a fact in Paris. She is but one of that quaint, queer *chaperonage*—if there is such a word—that forms the most amusing and most charming part of the American Quarter on the left bank of the Seine. There you will see dear old ladies who ought to be at home in Massachusetts; aunts who exist in a continual state of shock; sisters who put up with damp, smelly discomfort for the sake of the Talented One. Miss Kimpton was a sister, and the Talented One was Miss Jane Kimpton. It does not matter how talented Miss Jane was. Miss Jane had a stern New England conscience, with a biblical base under it, and she had learned while still young—and had taken to heart—the texts about not hiding her light under a bushel and not wrapping her talent in a napkin. Having been assured that she had a talent—for painting—she felt her duty and she was in Paris to exercise her talent. There was never a talent more thoroughly exercised. Metaphorically speaking, Miss Jane yanked her talent out of bed at sun-

up, made it jump through the hoop, chased it around the block, led it a twenty-mile hike, ran it through the mangle, sandpapered it, gave it a Swedish massage, and only let it go to bed at midnight when it was worn to a frazzle and gasping for breath.

With but a Middle Western small town amount of money and a New England conscience, Miss Jane felt the dutiful necessity of putting her talent through its culture by forced marches, so she cracked the whip over it and kept its nose to the grindstone, and so she had not much leisure to spend with Miss Kimpton. She needed all her time to keep her talent on the jump. So Miss Kimpton went agitatedly about the Quarter, carrying dishes of doughnuts she had cooked with her own hands but with inward doubts regarding French lard. From one apartment to another, and from boarding-house to boarding-house (she never called them *pensions*) she went with her little covered dish of doughnuts, for all the world as she had gone from house to house with doughnuts and jelly in her own Middle West town, and everyone liked her and loved her and loved her better and better. In a year her doughnuts were as famous among the Americans as the Louvre. I liked them better.

The children all liked her. They seemed one and all to jump through the holes in her doughnuts straight into her heart, but her great favorite was little Billy Toddles. A few days before Billy Toddles was to begin his real schooling—but let us skip all that. This is to be a short story. Enough that Miss Kimpton found delicious pleasure in taking the young rascal by the hand and leading him to school and in being at the school door when he came forth, his round, smiling face rosy from the overheated atmosphere of the school. Thus it was that Miss Kimpton

learned to know Don Cæsar de Bazan, commonly called Don.

Don was Billy Toddles's dog. He was a big dog—almost as high at the shoulders as Billy Toddles was tall—and he was a safe dog, and a kind dog. Miss Kimpton and Don were like aunt and uncle to Billy Toddles, and together they took Billy to school and brought him home again. Billy's mother felt safe about Billy when he was with Miss Kimpton, and Miss Kimpton felt safe when she was with Don, and it was a pleasant friendship all around—a little boy, and a dog, and a maiden lady. It was a triangle that even the most slimy French author could get no *vaudeville* out of.

Perhaps the close affection that sprung up between Miss Kimpton and Don was due to the fact that neither spoke French. At any rate, when Billy Toddles and his parents had to make a three weeks' trip to the Riviera and it was proposed to put Don temporarily in a Home for Canines, Miss Kimpton begged for him as eagerly as Don had ever begged for doughnuts, and they let her have him, to have and to hold until their return. Miss Kimpton was much pleased.

Before three days had passed, however, she discovered that dogs—of the size of Don—eat more than canaries eat, and that the remains of the little nibbles of food that sufficed for Miss Kimpton and Miss Jane were not enough for Don. He needed real food, and Miss Kimpton began buying bones.

Miss Kimpton asked her butcher with some hesitation if he sold bones suitable for dogs, but the answer set her at ease. He did. In an immense quantity and remarkable quality of English he told her that selling bones for dogs was one of his most important specialties and that to be able to sell bones for Miss Kimpton's dog

was—to say the least—a thing he had eagerly hoped to be able to do since the Bastille fell, or something of the sort. Thereafter Miss Kimpton trod her avenues and streets with a bundle of bones in her arms.

Your Parisian butcher does not, when you ask for bones, take a part of the skeleton of an animal from under his counter and hand it to you, letting you carry it home in your bare fist. He looks at the bones he means to sell you, turning his head on one side, artist-like. He surveys his entire collection of bones, groups them in his mind, discards one, adds another, rearranges those he has chosen, and then begins the process of wrapping them for you. When you emerge from the shop you are not carrying bones—you are carrying a work of art. A Paris butcher will send you forth with six sou's worth of bones in a bundle that looks like a dozen roses or a wedding cake. But never does it look like bones. You and he know that the graceful parcel contains bones but you can defy all others to guess. For a few days Miss Kimpton felt nervous about carrying bundles of bones, but even she soon realized that no one could fathom the contents of her parcel and she became quite fearless. Once she even stopped at the Millemont's for *feev o'clock* tea, wearing her best gray silk and carrying a bundle of bones. When she handed the parcel to the maid at the door of the studio that menial received it with the same care with which she received the *sept reflet* silk hat of the Count de Something. When Miss Kimpton left the maid said "I haf took ze care not to broke ze what is in it, madame, sank you." "It's bones," said Miss Kimpton, out of her honesty. "*Oui!*" said the maid, "*tres bon.*" "Oh, more than three!" said Miss Kimpton.

There was one spot in the neigh-

borhood of her home in Paris that Miss Kimpton always hurried by—the gate of the Cemetery Montparnasse. Glancing fearfully through the gate as she hurried by she saw the rows of tombs, mostly greenish with moss, and it gave her the shivers. The cemetery was damp and extremely French, so French that she feared it as she feared all other thoroughly French things with which she was not thoroughly familiar. She saw the funeral processions—once or twice those of noted men—come to the gate and enter. She knew well the solid-looking wreaths of immortelles, and the wax-coated flowers “guaranteed imperishable,” for there were several shops that sold them near by. She thought of the cemetery and its customs with awe. It was a remarkable thing that you could buy a tomb for a certain number of years, and be obliged to vacate it at the end of the period. It was strange that funerals were all classed—1st Class, 2d Class, 3d Class. It was odd that all the cortege, after the funeral, should stop and drink “bocks” at the hotel. It was rather nice that all the men on the street should raise their hats as the funeral passed.

From the walk, as she passed, Miss Kimpton could see two or three of the tombs, and she could see they had glass windows through which she could see the wreaths and sometimes a photograph, and very often a crucifix. Perhaps the sight of the crucifix was what caused Miss Kimpton the greatest agitation, for she came of Methodist stock and from a section where Protestant boys and girls run when they see the priest coming. Miss Kimpton had a lingering remnant of this fear of her childhood. She had, indeed, lingering remnants of many outgrown fears. And yet the cemetery was always a temptation to her. She knew

there were many great men buried in the Cemetery Montparnasse, and she had heard of the beauty of some of the tombs. She once stopped and peered in at the gate, half wishing she dared enter, but the *gendarme* at the gate happened to look toward her and she hurried on, distressfully agitated.

On All Saints' Day, however, Miss Kimpton almost entered the cemetery. She had heard, in the Quarter, something about All Saints—that it was the day when everyone visited the cemeteries—but the news did not seem to concern her, and it slipped from her mind until she came to the gate of the Cemetery Montparnasse. Hundreds were entering. Other hundreds were coming away. Most of those entering carried flowers, and, glancing down the long avenue between the tombs Miss Kimpton saw that the cemetery was a mass of blossoms and wreaths. One or two tombs were almost hidden beneath blossoms. That evening Miss Jane told her that it was wonderful! simply wonderful! Miss Jane had been on a veritable orgy of cemetery visits. She had not missed a cemetery.

The next day Miss Kimpton, tripping along homeward with her dainty little steps, paused again at the gate of the Cemetery Montparnasse. There were many in the cemetery—many entering, many leaving. She slid behind a group of chattering French women and slipped inside the gate. She kept close behind them up the main avenue, but she lost them when she paused to look at a wonderful mass of blossoms and wreaths, sure that some one of France's many great men must have received that lavish remembrance. The name was unknown to her, however, and she walked on. Presently she came upon a name renowned, and she paused again. She was getting over her

fear. After all, there was nothing in the cemetery to harm her. The other visitors were not so different from the people she knew, whom she met day after day in the streets. She wandered up one avenue and down another, reading the names and looking at the flowers. Once she seated herself on a bench to watch the passers. A pretty little French boy at her side looked up shyly, "Are you Eengleesh?" he asked with slow carefulness of pronunciation. "I am American," she answered. "Oonkle Sam!" he said, "Yankish doodles!" and she smiled and patted his shoulder. "Yes, dearie!" she said.

The boy's mother leaned forward.

"He is not afraid of you," she said. "Most time is he afraid, the 'tite. Coom, Maurice, ve mus' go 'ome. Ve mus' stop at ze gate for s'ings we leave zere," she explained. "Sometimes ve mus' wait, so many peoples leave s'ings zere."

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Kimpton. "Should I have left my bundle there? Was I wrong to bring it in? I didn't know!"

"It does not mattair," said the woman. "Ze *gendarme* look in ze bundle and say '*bon! allez! Zat* is all."

"But—but—will he look in my bundle?" asked Miss Kimpton in distress.

"Unless you have leave heem at ze gate, yes," said the woman. "*Tou-jours* he look at eet. Always. Sair-tainlee. Yes. Eet is to see how nobody take zee flowers and s'ings."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Miss Kimpton.

At the moment she thought of nothing worse than the unpleasantness of having a parcel of dog meat examined in full view of a crowd. When the woman arose Miss Kimpton arose also.

"It is nossing," said the woman,

seeing the worry on Miss Kimpton's face. "He look once an' say 'Bon! allez!', onless ze bundle—onless in ze bundle is somes'ing out of ze *cimetaire*."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Miss Kimpton again. "My gracious goodness!" Her eyes widened and she stared at the woman without seeing her. Suddenly she remembered something someone had said somewhere about the French hatred of the American souvenir hunter, who spares nothing, who will carry off anything that can be carried off. And she had, under her arm a bundle of—bones! She was in a cemetery, and there was a guard at the gate, and the guard had to examine the bundle, and the bundle contained bones! She was an American and Americans are souvenir hunters, and there are many tombs of famous men in the Cemetery Montparnasse, and she had a bundle, and in the bundle were—

Miss Kimpton dropped upon the bench. The thoughts were racing through her brain helter-skelter, like wild horses: "There is a guard at the gate with a sword, and Americans are souvenir hunters, and—Bones!" Each wild foray of her thoughts came back to that. With a sudden access of fear she jumped up and hurried down the avenue, away from the gate. She imagined that the bones in the parcel clattered together.

Up one avenue and down another Miss Kimpton walked, and as she walked and thought, the awfulness of her position seemed to increase. What did the French do to persons caught robbing cemeteries? She did not pause to look at the tombs now. She walked as if on a wager, and the *gendarmes* stationed here and there glanced at her curiously. She caught their glances and shivered. She looked at the cemetery wall, but not

even an agile boy could have scaled it. She seated herself on a bench and, rising, left her parcel of bones behind, but a tall Frenchman with the proverbial silky beard rescued it, and, bowing, presented it to her. She stammered her thanks and hurried away.

The Cemetery Montparnasse is not large, and in a few minutes Miss Kimpton became aware of the fact that she was attracting attention by walking past the same spots again and again. A *gendarme*, seeing her pause at a crossing of two ways, stepped up to her.

"*La porte? la!*" he said, and pointed to the gate. Miss Kimpton wanted anything but the gate, but she was obliged to thank him and go toward the gate. At the first turning she looked back and turned off. The *gendarme* was watching her. He saw she had not gone toward the gate, and he started after her. Instinctively she knew he had started after her and she hastened her steps. She almost ran. Looking back she saw the *gendarme* at the end of the alley. He was motioning to her to return, but she would not return. She hurried on. It was a blind alley and ended at the wall! When she turned again the *gendarme* was coming toward her. Somewhere in the depths of her consciousness she felt a dull gratitude that the Bastille had been destroyed and that but few persons were now guillotined. She looked to right and left.

Between two tombs at her right there was an opening, closed only by a swinging chain. Without hesitation Miss Kimpton raised her skirts above her ankles and stepped over the chain. She ran between the two tombs, dropping the bundle, and came out on the next alley.

"*Pardon, madame!*" said a voice, and she turned her head. Another of those silky beards was addressing

her. It held her bundle of bones. It raised its hat. Miss Kimpton was on the point of refusing the bundle when she saw a bone protruding through one corner of the paper. With a gasp of horror she took the bundle, covering the tell-tale bone with her hand.

"Oh, thank you!" she said. "I'm—I'm so careless. I'm—I'm always dropping things. Of course it's of no importance—only bo—only——"

The Frenchman was bowing and smiling. He did not understand a word she said. She might have yelled "bones!" at him and he would not have understood.

"Thank you ever so much!" said Miss Kimpton. "I——"

"*Pardon!*" said the Frenchman, and bending down he disengaged a festoon of green from Miss Kimpton's foot.

"Thank you!" said Miss Kimpton. "*Mercy. Bo koop!*"

It was a sign of her utter demoralization that she attempted to speak French. She looked at the Frenchman with pleading eyes. He was such a nice looking Frenchman. She wished she could speak fluent French. If she could tell him she had bones in her parcel and that they were innocent dog bones, he would surely assist her. He seemed such an assisting-tempered Frenchman!

There was, about this particular Frenchman, an especially distinguished air. In his buttonhole he wore three small wisps of ribbon of various colors, signifying that his nation had honored him with three decorations. On his hands were black kid gloves of abnormal glossiness. His black coat was immaculately free from creases. His seven reflections hat was so smooth that not a wisp of its nap was turned the wrong way. But, above all (or beneath all) his trousers! It is in the trousering that the Frenchman lacks

distinction. It is as if the whole nation had said "Ze hat? Superb! Ze coat? Magnificent! Ze waistcoat? Admirable! So must all be. But ze pants? Pouf! Any old pants will do!" Taken as a nation France can show the worst collection of trousers in the known world. I suppose it comes from dressing the little military recruits in any uniform trousers that come handy. It is as if the nation had said (pardon the paraphrase) "Pants is pants!" I have seen a little recruit wearing a pair of trousers so much too large for him that he had to turn them up at the bottom so far that the turned-up part crowded him under the arms. The artists are careless that way, too. The first riddle you hear in Paris is the old "What two cities do an artist's trousers resemble?" Answer—Toulon and Toulouse. Of course you have to put the chopped-off "g" sound on the end of Toulon to get the real beauty of the answer.

However, all this or something else has made the Frenchman indifferent to sartorial perfection in trouserings. Perhaps the Frenchman talks so much with his hands that it draws attention away from his ankles, rendering good tailoring unnecessary in the lower regions of his anatomy. Many a Frenchman you meet on the boulevards, jauntily swinging his cane, is a Beau Brummel from the waist up, and a dock laborer from the waist down. Miss Kimpton's Frenchman was as sartorially perfect from the waist down as from the waist up, so she knew he must be a most distinguished man. Even his shoes were fit to wear, and that is saying a great deal for a Frenchman's shoes. Miss Kimpton, with hand covering the end of bone that protruded from the parcel, looked at the Frenchman pleadingly and seemed to recognize his face. She was sure he was not the

President of the Republic for the President was short and plump and appeared in prints with a waistcoat cut low in order to show a diagonal swatch of ribbon across his shirt front. Member of the Academy? Minister of Justice? Director of the Opera? She was not sure what he was, but his face was familiar, and it was smiling, and it was kind.

"Zhay nay parley Frawnsay," said Miss Kimpton, gasping at her own temerity; "Do you understand English?"

"*J' suis desolé, mais non!*" said the Frenchman sadly. "I can note spick eet."

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Kimpton, and then, suddenly; "Oh!"

The relentless *gendarme*, kindly intent on aiding the flustered American lady, had hunted her down. He appeared at the opening between the tombs, one foot already raised to step over the swinging chain. Miss Kimpton saw him. She uttered a little cry of panic. With a wild gesture she thrust the parcel of bones into the hands of the gentlemanly Frenchman and, turning, fled toward the gate. She did not stop until she was in her room and had locked and double locked the door. Then she stood in the middle of the floor, with her hand on her heart, listening. But nothing happened. Nothing but Don. He came and sat on his haunches and held up his fore paws and begged for bones. He did not get any.

The handsomely-dressed, distinguished-looking Frenchman, in the Cemetery Montparnasse, had the bones. He had Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, and three decorations, and a hat with seven reflections, and a paper parcel of dog bones. For a moment he stared after the fleeing Miss Kimpton and then he looked at the parcel. The *gendarme* came from between the tombs and, after a

respectful salute, he also stared at the parcel. He of the silky beard turned the parcel over. He discovered the protruding bone end.

"Devilment!" he exclaimed to the *gendarme*; "'Tis bones!"

"Impossible! But, yes!" cried the *gendarme*. "'Tis bones!" He bent down and peered into the parcel. "It is unthinkable, it is never to be believed, but—'tis truly bones!"

Suddenly the silky-bearded became enormously angry. His face became red. He spluttered.

"They are not my bones! Do you mean to stand there like an idiot and say they are my bones? What? You insulting rascal! Do you suggest that I—that I, the Minister of——"

"Ah! pardon, Monsieur the Minister! Pardon a million times! I said nothing. I thought nothing. Not for worlds would I think——"

"Hah! That is better. Don't think. When I, the Minister of——"

"But, Monsieur the Minister, I give you a thousand assurances that I did not think. I thought nothing. I think nothing now."

"The idea of it! Do you think I would carry bones around with me? It is unthinkable! That you should think that I would——"

"Oh, Monsieur, Monsieur! I assure you—I swear to you—I declare to you I never thought! Absolutely! Three times never! You are desolating my heart by saying so. I beg you to restrain your anger. I—I never think. I would not dare think. I beg you! I plead with you!"

"Hah." The silky-bearded raised his head and frowned. "Very good! It is enough! Take your bones and be off with you!"

He thrust the parcel into the *gendarme's* hands and, swinging on his heel, strode toward the gate. The *gendarme* stared after him.

"Such as he make us hate the government," he said, "and then they call us anarchists. The puff-ball! The big bag of wind! Tst!"

He spat on the ground to show his contempt for all such Ministers, and then walked to the gate house. The guard greeted him.

"What have you there, little one?" asked the guard.

The *gendarme* shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing important," he said. "A bundle of bones for the dog of the American lady who frequently passes the gate here, whose name is Kimpton, and who lives at Number 47 Rue Boissonade, where my wife is janitress, and which I shall restore to her presently when I go off duty."

"Ah, yes!" said the guard. "I know her well. I saw her enter with the parcel known to me to contain bones for her dog, and I saw her depart with a hurriedness that included a leaving behind of the parcel. I called to her to remind her of the bones, but she made immense haste. She's very gentle, that little lady."

"Right, old fellow! She's the sort you don't have to watch, hey? She wouldn't steal a blade of grass."

"Not a bit like these other crazy Americans. She is the real thing, hey? The real gentle-lady."

"Absolutely! It does one good to see that kind."

"Yes! You are right! And——"

"And what?"

"And nothing at all. I was just thinking it will be worth while seeing her face this evening when I take back these bones."

THE THIRD PERSON

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

THE red-headed stenographer who presided over the ante-chamber languidly entered and laid at the Fiction Editor's elbow a card. The Fiction Editor viewed it askance, and said, with a sigh: "Send her in." Then he added, to himself: "I might as well have it out with her. She is impossible."

Having thus delivered himself, he hastily examined his nose and one eye in a circular pin-cushion disk which he covertly maintained among his desk paraphernalia and impedimenta. For the card read: "Miss Thomas"; and although Miss Thomas would be sixteen and simpering, or plump and passé, or gaunt and garrulous, the fiction department of *The Blue Blaze* must uphold in the flesh the quality which it breathed in the spirit. And the Fiction Editor was young—"young and clever," according to press notices.

When, with heel-tap and slight rustle, Miss Thomas crossed the threshold and halted modestly, he instantly sprang to his four-button feet.

"Miss Thomas?"

"This is the—the Editor?"

"The Fiction Editor. You sent in your card to me. Will you be seated?"

He indicated a chair; he even drew it forward. It was a tasteful, leather-bottom, wax-finish chair, in keeping with the *Blue Blaze's* carefully cultivated idea of quiet sumptuousness.

"Thank you."

Miss Thomas sat. The Fiction Editor sat. She examined a worn but still smart little shoe, peeping out

from below ("She must be perched upon the other foot," thought the Fiction Editor), and he politely examined her.

For Miss Thomas was not sixteen and simpering, nor plump and passé, nor gaunt and garrulous. No. She was nicely betwixt and between, considered in each pair of qualities; she appeared to present a perfect balance. Her first name probably was Henrietta, because she was so the opposite of the word. She was just the size, and the kind, and all that, of a girl who in the very face of a man can sit on her foot so instantaneously and so charmingly that he does not know how.

Now she lifted her eyes, and they were innocent blue.

"Beautiful day, isn't it?" ventured the Fiction Editor, who had not been out since eight o'clock that morning.

"Yes?" answered Miss Thomas doubtfully, but agreeing in such a fashion as was to be anticipated from a suppliant at the throne of grace.

"I presume that you wished to see me about some manuscripts of yours," encouraged the Fiction Editor. He opened a drawer and took therefrom a packet confined in a torn envelope held together by a rubber band. "Three, were there not?"

"Have you—have you read them?" invited Miss Thomas, a pretty flush suffusing her soft, girlish countenance.

"My readers read them first, and reported; but, owing to your request, they passed them on to me."

He shuffled through them. Miss Thomas clasped her slender, tangued hands in hope spontaneous.

"And have you decided?"

The Fiction Editor smiled, with a smile which was intended to be at once rueful and kindly.

"I am very sorry, but I have agreed with the readers. We cannot use any of the three."

"But I have tried *so* hard," faltered Miss Thomas. Her eyes were dewy with protest and disappointment. "That is why I wanted to see you. *Can* you tell me *anything* that I can do to make my manuscripts better? I write, and I write, and I write—I love to write; but nobody will take even one story. I've sent you twenty-seven, and all have come back. Perhaps I write too fast."

"N'—no," mused the Fiction Editor judiciously; "I should not say that your work shows evidence of haste or carelessness. It is above the average in phrasing."

"Thank you for that much, anyway." Real gratitude was in her tone. And she added dolefully: "I always was marked high in rhetoric at school. But I want to be an author. Oh!"—and she became enthusiastic again—"it must be joy, when you have a beautiful thought or a message, to be enabled to share it with the world."

The Fiction Editor chilled. He had heard the sentiment before. In his opinion as arbiter, many thoughts and messages would do better to stay at home than to essay to travel by medium of the printed page.

"Yes," he responded evenly. "But the fault I find with your manuscripts as submitted is lack of technique."

"I do use a typewriter, though," she defended, wide-eyed. "And that is the size paper editors are supposed to like best. And"—triumphantly—"I never, never roll a manuscript."

The Fiction Editor squirmed—unobtrusively.

"The great principle of short-story

or long-story construction is the triangle," he deposed. "Just as geometry may be applied to picture composition, so may it be applied to the art of written composition. That idea you lack."

"I don't understand," she implored helplessly. "Please go on."

She listened with parted lips and expression intense, for his next.

"Now, as I remember, or recall," he continued, indulgent of her and the opportunity combined, "in one of these stories you have four or five characters, all about equal in the importance attached by you to them, and with something happening to all—something of interest, to be sure, but not of paramount interest in any one case. It is a narrative, or a story on very old-fashioned lines. And this other story—so-called story—is concerned simply with one single person who repeats poetry—or alleged poetry—and grieves and dies—doesn't he—of a broken heart, because he isn't appreciated. It is a nice little sketch, but it isn't the type of short story that *The Blue Blaze* is looking for. The ideal short story is triangular. There should be three interests, or one double interest and another, outside, in connection."

"A woman and two men. She loves one, and both love her," exclaimed Miss Thomas breathlessly, as if discovering a great truth.

"Well—that is apt to be the groundwork," admitted the Fiction Editor, candidly. "It is popular. But still the tale may be about only two persons—man and woman, say; and the element to complete the triangle may be a passion, such as a different love, an appetite, and so forth. A fourth conflicting element or unit is perfectly proper, and there may be others, all under control. But the base of the model story, from short-story to novel, is the triangle of in-

terests—even though that be composed of only a man as he thinks he is, as he really is, and as he seems to be."

"Like—like my poet, almost," hazarded Miss Thomas timidly.

"Your poet doubtless has capabilities, if he is handled correctly."

"But I don't like third persons," argued Miss Thomas, with sudden anxiety. "I like my hero and heroine to have a good time without being interfered with. The third person is such—such an uncomfortable person to have around. Don't *you* think so?"

She blushed. The Fiction Editor was afraid that he blushed also.

"Um-m-m," he murmured non-committally. "And in this office," he continued abruptly, "we prefer the happy ending."

"Oh, *do* you?" Miss Thomas brightened again.

"In the typical love story—and the love story pure and simple is the one fashion which never wanes—there is the hero, and the girl, of course, and the third element as a foil—another man, perhaps, as you suggested. The public taste demands that the right man should win. It is logical that the right man, or the hero, should win, and we in this office think that the ending thus expressed is the higher art. That leaves everybody satisfied."

"Except the third person," supplemented Miss Thomas hesitantly.

"Yes; but you know it is another satisfaction that the third person is left to look out for himself," prompted the Fiction Editor, somewhat airily. "The writer's business is to settle the hero and the heroine aright; to give the fair to the fair, the noble to the noble, the brave to the brave, hearts akin to hearts akin; and the discarded one may with impunity be thrown aside as of little ultimate consequence. So my advice to a new

writer is, not to experiment and strive after the bizarre, but to follow the proven."

Miss Thomas sighed from her parted lips; she slowly removed her fascinated eyes from the Fiction Editor's face, and as if reluctantly breaking the spell she sighed again. She stood—her second foot miraculously appearing, in time.

"I have learned *so* much," she asserted gratefully. "Thank you more than I can tell." She held out her tan-gloved little hand for the manuscripts. "I'll take these back, then. But I shall write new ones. I *know* I shall succeed now."

"That's the spirit," praised the Fiction Editor, although privately he posed as considering that the young writer, of inaptitude, was a pest, and that to incite him (or her) to fresh endeavor was a crime against the editorial brotherhood. He also stood. "We might take the elevator together, if you are going down," he suggested. "I can put you on your car. This is about closing time."

He shut his roll-top desk, and seized his hat, and left the office to the Muses and the janitor.

Oddly, but delightfully (for the Fiction Editor), their car lines coincided; still more oddly, their destination corners were the same. But not until they halted, to part with mutual good-will (she was actually an unsophisticated, unspoilt girl with great personal charm, thought the Fiction Editor; and what she thought of him was a problem which provided him with a pleasant prickle)—not until they halted, to part, as aforesaid, did he discover that whereas his home entrance was on the north of the large apartment building, hers was on the east.

"Isn't that remarkable!" exclaimed Miss Thomas. "The idea, that the very editor I was sending

my manuscripts to lived in the very same building with me, and I never even dreamed it! Did *you* know it?"

"I don't believe that I recognized the address," answered the Fiction Editor cautiously. "You didn't name the building—did you?"

"Oh, no. I gave it Thirty-three-fourteen Forty-second Street."

"That told me nothing, you see," he smiled. "I'm on the other side. But since we are neighbors, may I not call, unprofessionally? Do you write *all* the time?"

"I'm home every evening. Will you call, some time? Thank you. I'd rather talk to a real editor than write at an imaginary one. You have told me so much, though, that I'm simply dying to put into practice some of those precepts."

"Remember, then," smiled the Fiction Editor kindly, "the triangle principle, and the logically happy ending, where like is paired with like and the extraneous element is disposed of or not, as convenient."

He lifted his hat, and with a singular sensation of lightness turned the corner for his own entrance. Romance lived and breathed.

Miss Thomas and her mother kept house together in Apartment 26, which was one of the four-room apartments especially designed for such a family. Mrs. Thomas was a quiet, drab little body, who possessed the commendable trait of effacing herself in social hours, and leaving her daughter to do the honors. There was a young man who seemed to be attached to the household in a vague but friendly capacity. His last name was Moses, and his first name was John. Mrs. Thomas and Miss Thomas always called him John. And John—homely, ordinary John, fitted him exactly; fitted him much better than did his distinctly shelf-grown clothes. To the Fiction Editor, an awkward, lack-lustre, unin-

teresting, and stupid individual was this John; but he came in handy for retiring to kitchen or to corner with Mrs. Thomas, and leaving the Fiction Editor with Elizabeth.

Early the Fiction Editor by observance found out that *her* first name was Elizabeth; which was so roundly acceptable that he dismissed Henrietta as an unkind suggestion.

Sometimes they talked of the weather, sometimes of magazines, and frequently of Art in Writing. Elizabeth proved an eager disciple, and she worked very hard; but even the Fiction Editor had begun to despair of cultivating her latent spark of genius into the desired flame (her poor stories were so machine-made), until, one day, it came: *the* theme, *the* construction, *the* atmosphere. It filtered through to him, with other hopefuls; but it was accompanied by the Associate Editor herself.

"I'm so glad," she said. "I think this girl has succeeded at last. Read it right away, Mr. Morrison. It is a commonplace idea, delicately worked out, and it rings true. The ending is just such an ending as you like."

When he had read it, he too was glad. He was glad that he could without reserve back up the judgment of the Associate Editor; he was glad that the manuscript bore the name which it did, and that the name need have naught to do with his own decision. Elizabeth once had diffidently proposed that she sign her stories with a *nom de plume*, so as not to cause him any possible embarrassment; but he had explained that in their official function editors held themselves carefully impartial, even to leaning backward, on occasion. If her manuscripts got through to him, they would receive his best, but his strictly conscientious, attention. Few did get through to him; none stuck; until—ah, he had bided and nurtured not in vain.

With that enthusiasm which seizes every editor upon discovery of a new star in the literary firmament (this little metaphor is not copyrighted, but is for general assimilation), he telephoned Miss Thomas; telephoned her immediately. He would not, could not, wait for the routine by mail, nor for the evening, either.

"Miss Thomas? This is Mr. Morrison speaking. Er—would you find it convenient to drop in during the day? At the office?"

"It seems important, to me. It will to you, I hope."

"I think you won't regret. All right, then. Good-by."

In about an hour Miss Thomas did enter. The Fiction Editor wheeled in his chair, a glow of honest joy upon his features. He smiled upon Miss Thomas. In her smooth, soft cheeks burned a little spot of crimson. Her blue eyes were large, half with fear, half with expectancy. She too was excited.

"Well," greeted the Fiction Editor good-naturedly, "sit down, and we'll talk it over."

"Is it?" she demanded, sinking into the chair.

He nodded.

"An acceptance?" Her voice was tremulous.

He held up the manuscript.

"You have arrived," he said. "This story sticks. I'm as glad as you are, and I wanted to be the first to congratulate you," and he extended his hand.

They shook. That was a portion of the reward of the Fiction Editor—that slender hand in his.

"Which is it?"

"The Third Person.' It came through to me with enthusiastic comments, and I agree with them all."

"You're going to keep it? Really?"

"Keep it and pay you well for it, and illustrate it, and print it! You see, you have followed out the theory. You have the three interests, the girl and the two men contrasting. It is, of course, primitive in its materials; but it rings true. It is life."

"I tried to make it end the way you say."

"You couldn't help it. The clean-cut, clever young chap was bound to win her. He was the one to make her happy. Why, to marry her to the other chap would be to spoil her literary career. He was her inferior. There is just the proper touch of pathos mingled with the bells of joy. I call it a strong, sweet, logical story, not the less strong because it is so logical. The ending is all right, absolutely all right." He paused. "Seems to me that the plot is a bit reminiscent," he ventured. "I don't know that I am related to the hero—but I covet his place. Can I have it, Elizabeth?"

She gazed upon him with eyes startled. Her chest rose and fell quickly.

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Morrison."

"I mean," he resumed steadily, "that the story is very like a cross-section from the life of three people whom I have in mind. I hope—did you?—I don't wish to presume—but if the sketch is not real life, can't we make it so, dear?"

Her face was now all crimson; she looked not upon him, but at her lap.

"I want you," he continued. "We'll act out this story. Didn't you have us three in mind, when you wrote it? Now, 'fess up, Elizabeth."

"I didn't think you'd suspect. I changed the names all I could, and turned the apartment into a house. But I've been trying so hard to suit—and this seemed such a good idea"—She faltered. She was crying.

"There's nothing to feel badly about, dearest," he soothed, much distressed, himself. "Then it is a sketch from life, and of life. Certainly; and life is the inexhaustible source of fiction. That is what *The Blue Blaze* craves—and that is what I, as editor, crave. But in this case I scarcely dared to hope. So you're the girl of the story, and I'm the hero, and poor John is the third element necessary, but simply a cog in the machinery. Your title is a very pretty play upon the reader's imagination. 'Which is the third person?' he will ask. And, moreover, he will be pleased when he knows. It's the right ending. And, Elizabeth, it's the best, best story that ever came into this office. Dearest, darling, you —" The Fiction Editor suddenly arose, with intentions tumultuous; whereat Elizabeth as suddenly straightened, and faced him.

"But I'm engaged to John," she quavered. "I am. That is another place where the story is different. Did you think—oh, you didn't think!"

The Fiction Editor dropped back into his chair.

"To *him*! To John! What?"

"I've been engaged to him for two

years. And he's a nice boy, too. He's as nice as he can be. You may not think so, but he is."

The Fiction Editor pulled himself together.

"Um-m, does John write, also?" he queried.

"No. He's a grocery man. He graduated from the high-school, though." She stood uncertainly, as if about to go. "I'm sorry," she said. "Maybe you won't want the story now."

"Oh, yes," answered the Fiction Editor. "Wait one moment. Here—the cashier will honor this warrant for you, at the desk. Of course we will keep the story. I consider it a model—as I said. And we hope, Miss Thomas, that you will continue to favor us."

"I—don't—know," replied Miss Thomas dubiously, from toward the threshold. "I may not have time. We're to be married this summer. John doesn't think much of my writing, anyway; but now he'll be glad, because we planned that if I *did* get any money, I would use it on my trousseau."

"Oh!" gasped the Fiction Editor, with a little stab of pain which could not be assigned to the appendix.

THE WEAVERS

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

THE years are weavers, weaving as we will,
Though hidden is the pattern from our sight:
How shall our hearts with joy or anguish fill
When time shall turn the pattern to the light!



THE INFIDEL

by

Achmed Abdullah



ON the night before, they had shot the sergeant, plundered the commissary tent, filled their water-canteens, and deserted.

Somewhere to the Northeast was Tripoli and the open sea. Thence perhaps a chance to escape to Marseilles. And who could find them there? Let them try to dig out half a dozen rats from a thousand holes.

They were all of the same type, all six of them—the képis set back rakishly on their round heads, the hair cropped short, narrow-lidded, beady, black eyes, and square jowls blue with close shaving. Their open tunics showed hairy chests covered with blue tattoo marks—tribal signs in a way. For they all belonged to the same band of Marseilles Apaches. They came from the quarter of Saint Jean. Some of them had been born and bred in its ancient, putrid streets. The others were Corsicans who had made the Salaris too hot to hold them. So they had transferred their gentle activities to a land where the vendetta does not always follow.

Balloche had of course taken the lead; not that he had any knowledge of the lie of the land, but he was morally forced to make a bluff at leading. At home, in the quarter of Saint Jean, he had been a great and feared chief; and so the responsibility for this expedition was his. He squinted at the sun and led the way toward the Northeast, straight through the undulating, yellow *erg*.

Close behind him marched his

younger brother, surnamed Canichon le Mak', and then came the others.

They were convict soldiers of the African Battalion, the notorious *Bat' d'Alf*. Burglars, crooks, murderers, highwaymen, vagabonds, pickpockets, cadets, and garroters—Apaches all. They were young. There was not a man of the six more than twenty-four years of age. But they were all tarnished and aged and gray with vice. They were all familiar with the inside of jail and penitentiary. And most of them expected—and rather proudly—to become some day children of *La Veuve*, the Red Widow—the Guillo-tine.

But then they were Frenchmen, and so they had to serve their two years in the army. And since it is not good to distribute the spawn of the Outer Boulevards, the *fortifs* and the Marseilles waterfront among simple, clean peasant lads in red trousers, a wise republic enrolls them in a regiment of their own, gives them heavy-fisted Flemings and Normans for sergeants, and sun-burnt, sun-hardened colonial veterans for officers. Then they send them to Tunis, with the devout hope that they will kill the Touaregs or that the Touaregs will kill them. Either is good for France.

It makes also splendid copy for newspapers and for writers of fiction. For back there, in Africa, distance lends roseate enchantment even to an Apache. The sun of Tunis and the Outer Desert sheds sweet halos

around their unholy heads. There is a despatch once in a while . . . the story of a desert fight . . . a hero . . . a martyr . . . *oh, les braves gens* . . . and the Guillotine is cheated of another prospective customer.

Balloche made a point of boasting that ten times he had deserved capital punishment. As a delicate advertisement of this fact he had a guillotine tattooed on his left shoulder, with the name of his last victim below . . . "a sort of alibi" as he called it laughingly. It was a never-ending source of amusement when the half-company stripped for a swim. The conviction that sooner or later *Monsieur de Paris* would shorten him by a head, held no terror for him.

Gaily singing he marched ahead. And the others took up the riotous refrain:

"D'puis c'est moi le souteneur
Naturel de ma petite soeur . . ."

Doubtless they had an idea that they were heroes. They had really deserted in a spirit of bravado. The murder of the sergeant was too small a thing to upset their equanimity. The thought of escape and return to Marseilles had come afterwards. And now they were just a little bit disappointed. The yellow, sun-scorched *erg* seemed to grimace at their new-found liberty.

They marched on, carelessly eating their scant provisions and taking long pulls at their water-canteens without thought of the wide desert ahead. Then, on the third day, a little cloud of regret fell on them. Balloche admitted that he had lost his way.

They halted near a shallow water-hole, but it was empty. Digging with their bayonets and with their hands they managed to find a little moist earth. They chewed it and

sucked it, spitting out the sand-grains and cursing their luck and each other.

In the cool of early dawn they broke camp. But towards noon they complained that the tropical sun was biting through their heavy boots and blistering their feet so they stopped and erected a low, improvised shelter-tent with the help of their Le-bels and bayonets and tunics. Then they fell asleep, and they had pleasant cool dreams of rivers of absinthe and white wine running down mountains of bouillabaisse.

In the evening they found a filthy camel-wallow. They fought over the green, reeking, putrid slime. Ristorucci, one of the Corsicans, was killed in the scuffle. The other five drank and slept.

They had hardly anything left to eat. But the next day there was a ray of hope. They found faint paths in the sand, little shallow holes made by the soft pads of dromedaries, all leading east in a vague, general direction. They thought that they must be near one of the *ksours* of the Berbers. And so once more they stiffened their backs and their spirits to the long, dragging desert-pull ahead. Once more they burst into profane song.

On the fifth day they had eaten their last morsel of food. They stumbled and fell, weak, played out. Their feet were sore and blistered, their lips cracked and bleeding. And of course there were rage and despair and quarrels.

Canichon le Mak' insulted Ossetti, the Corsican. Ossetti made a savage lunge with his bayonet. And so Balloche killed him, to protect his brother. Taolini, the other Corsican, seemed to lose his reason suddenly. He cried like a woman, he clawed at his eyes, and then he commenced to stuff his mouth full of dry, hot sand.

So the other three left him and marched on. Balloche still in the lead, then his younger brother, and Escragnolles the last.

For a long time they could hear the cries of their comrade whom they had left to die:

"Oh sangu di Cristu . . . oh misericordia . . . O-ohh, per la Madonna . . ."

Late that afternoon, an hour before the sun went down, they saw a thin, green edge on the horizon.

No—it was not a mirage. It was life—life and water and food and shelter. The trail became more distinct. There was fresh refuse of camels. And suddenly they seemed to be strong and healthy. Vigorously the blood coursed through their veins. They pushed on at a rapid pace. They would be there before night-fall.

And so they marched, marched, marched, supporting each other, encouraging each other with rude jests, singing snatches of ribald songs.

Nearer and nearer they came. Finally they broke into a lope, then into a run. They were saved, saved. Oh, but it was good to live, to breathe!

They could see the feathery green of the date-trees, the grayish green of the eucalypti. They could hear the crunching of the water-wheels, the dull pounding of flat mill-stones. They could smell the sharp, savory smell of *kouss-koussou*.

Here and there they could see a swarthy Berber moving among the black felt tents. They hailed them. They shouted. They cried with joy.

The Berbers saw them. They recognized the French uniforms though they were in rags.

Then there were developments.

About three months before, while the fighting men of the *ksour* were away on a razzia to help themselves

to the cattle and the belongings of a neighboring tribe, another small band of deserters had visited their village. They had stolen all there was to be stolen. They had eaten all there was to be eaten. They had forced the young girls to wait on them and to dance for them. They had lifted the veils of the married women. And then, in the true spirit of Apaches, they had soiled the well, polluted the mosque, hacked down a dozen date-trees or so, and cut off the beard of the aged village priest.

Therefore, when the three showed their hated uniforms and their hated white faces, the Berbers knew that it was a special sending of All-Merciful Providence. They ran toward them, opening fire with their long-barreled flint matchlocks.

It was all over in a few minutes. Escragnolles and Canichon le Mak' fell dead, hit by a dozen bullets. Balloche returned the fire. Then he ran. The Berbers did not trouble about following him. They left him to the tender mercies of the desert.

To his dying day Balloche could not make for himself a true picture of the days that followed. He had a vague knowledge of running and stumbling and falling, always falling. He also remembered how some fool had mistaken his lungs for an anvil and had beaten it with a dull, thudding, cruel hammer. Then he must have become insane.

There was a veiled picture of a water-hole filled with thick slime and the rotting remains of a young dromedary. He remembered drinking the half-liquid stuff.

Then there was a sirocco . . . oh yes, to be sure there was a sirocco . . . and he had prayed in a crazy, savage manner. Yes, it is true: he, Balloche, he, the leader of Apaches, the hero of the quarter of Saint Jean, the hater of priests and God . . . he had prayed. He had

prayed to the Virgin and to Christ and to all the dear Saints. And then he had cried like a child.

Then for a whole day there was a yellow, dancing veil in front of his eyes—a thin, mocking, yellow veil—and he remembered how he had walked in a circle, and how somebody had laughed. He wanted to kill that somebody. He drew his bayonet, so cautiously, so very cautiously. But he felt suddenly that he himself was that somebody, and so of course he could not kill him.

Then there were many years of stupefaction and horrible pains of hunger. He remembered how he had tried to bite off his swollen tongue . . . for he was so hungry . . . and how he could not do it. And then of course he had cried again, like a child, like a hysterical woman.

One day, sanity must have returned to him.

For he remembered finding himself in a little oasis. It was half buried by the desert sands. But there was a hole, partly filled with water. There were a few stunted trees. There were sun-dried dates, hard as stones.

He ate and ate and ate. He filled himself with water, until the moisture oozed from his pores. Then he slept for a long time.

The next day he filled his pockets with dates and his canteen with water. Somehow he had not lost the canteen while he was mad.

And he marched on.

It was a white day, clear as crystal, without a cloud, with a fierce blaze of pure light. He looked up at the sun and made a rude reckoning; he was going south, somewhere into the unknown lands. But he did not care.

Again, after a few days, he found a half-buried oasis, brackish water and wild figs. There was a narrow

trail, a thin line as made by a single camel, and he followed it. Toward evening he picked up a blue neckerchief. It was half covered with sand. But the half which protruded had not yet faded to a streaked gray. He decided that it could not have been there more than a few days. Things bleach quickly in the desert sun.

Then, early one afternoon, wild joy surged in his heart. The yellow sands were melting into a great, grayish-green plain covered with low scrub and camel-grass. The ground showed signs of moisture. Towards night he was skirting the edges of a cork forest, and the next morning he saw a distant range of mountains, pink and lavender in the dawning light.

And the heart of Balloche, Apache, murderer, thief, and denier of the Deity, was glad. Deep in his stunted, gray soul there was a certain feeling which he could not crystallize into words, not even into thoughts. Somehow it reminded him of a day, years ago, when he was a child. Back home, in the quarter of Saint Jean, a bigger boy had beaten him unmercifully, and a kind English lady had given him a shining silver franc-piece and a handful of sweets. He had been grateful to the lady.

But to whom should he be grateful because of the forest, the mountains, the water, the cooler air?

Balloche spat and shook his head. He cursed himself for a specimen of a fat-hearted, sentimental bourgeois. Which made him laugh out loud.

The harsh laugh sounded strange in the great, crushing loneliness. It sounded so strange that it frightened him. It made him feel as on that day in the Cannebière of Marseilles when he had killed the night watchman of the big jewelry store

and he had imagined that the thud of the falling body would awaken the people in the house. He obeyed the natural impulse of a frightened man. He looked about him.

And there, not twenty feet away, was something in the grass.

It seemed to be alive, moving, feebly active. He took a firm hold on his rifle and advanced cautiously. He could see the glitter in the black eyes of the thing. It tried to slink away. But it did not seem able to. So Balloche took his courage in both hands and walked up to it. And then he laughed again. This time he laughed at his fears, a great, throaty laugh of relief.

For the thing in the grass was only a little girl, a child in years.

He stopped and had a good, long look. She was a Kabyle, judging from her reddish-brown skin and the blue tattoo marks on chin and forehead. Her dress was in shreds. She had lost her neckerchief. Her bluish-black hair was dusty and unkempt. Her soft skin was cut and scratched and bleeding. She seemed half starved—"ready to cash in," he thought.

Balloche did not know what to do. If his best friend had told him that he, Balloche, the feared chief of the Saint Jean Apaches, was feeling pity and compassion for this stray whisp of brown humanity, he would have cursed him for a liar and followed up the insult with a kick and a knife-thrust. But, try as he would, he did not seem able to walk away and leave the child in her plight, as he would have done "in his sane moments," as he called them.

He walked up close to her. He bent down and tried to put his hand on her forehead with a gesture of clumsy caress. And he jumped back three feet.

For the little thing, wounded and helpless and entirely pitiful, spat at

him like a cornered wildcat and broke into a torrent of abuse in the Arabic. His knowledge of the language was limited to curt demands for food and drink and three or four bad words. But he knew instinctively that the child was not paying him any compliments. A few words had a familiar ring . . . "*Giaour, ibn Kalb*" . . . Infidel, Son of a Dog . . .

He grinned appreciatively. The little thing had spirit and aggressiveness, qualities he admired in man and woman. Again he approached her and bent down. But he withdrew hurriedly, with a howl of pain. She had quickly reached up and buried her sharp little teeth in his leg.

He sat down on the ground at a safe distance and looked at her.

"The devil—the damned little devil . . ."

He tried to talk to her in French.

"Look here, *ma belle*, be reasonable, won't you? I'm not trying to hurt you . . . I am trying to help you . . . You . . ."

But the girl broke into another torrent of picturesque guttural abuse. For the first time in his life Balloche knew that he was silenced, utterly non-plussed.

She tried to rise, to move away. But a spasm of pain distorted her small features, and she lay still again.

Unconsciously Balloche had given up all thoughts of leaving her to her fate. He was aware of his strength, of course. He knew that it would be an easy matter for him to walk over and lift her up, if she wanted to or not, for all her abuse and her sharp little teeth. But he had a strange, stubborn idea that he wanted to gain her confidence, that he wanted those black eyes to lose their frightened, hateful expression.

He considered what to do. He looked at her in a puzzled way, and

she returned the stare with interest.

Suddenly he grinned. He remembered past experiences with stray gutter-pups. He took a handful of dates from his pocket and opened his water-canteen. He began eating and drinking with relish, smacking his lips in a noisy, exaggerated manner.

He did not have to wait long for results. There came a look of overpowering desire into the black eyes of the little child, and then a pitiful moan. He paid no attention. He kept on with his meal. Then there was another half-suppressed sob, and a few broken words in the Arabic. But this time they did not sound like abuse. Balloche looked up and raised his eyebrows questioningly. She spoke rapidly and pointed at the food.

He grinned and threw her over a handful of dates. She ate ravenously. Then he thought that he could once more risk approaching her. He took the water-canteen, walked over to her, and knelt on the ground beside her. He slipped his left arm around her shoulders and helped her to sit up, holding the canteen to her cracked lips. She drank feverishly, with long, sucking pulls.

When she had finished her meal she looked at him with a faint, pathetic smile. He patted her cheek awkwardly, and she smiled again, a pretty, sunny smile which showed her white teeth. And somehow the smile seemed to warm his heart, his whole body. He could not understand it. It was all very strange and very foolish.

Then she pointed at her left leg. He examined it carefully, afraid of hurting her, looking at her every few seconds with a roughly kind word and a reassuring gesture. Her ankle was badly wrenched, and her arms and legs were scratched and

cut by dagger-grass and camel-thorn. He massaged the swollen joint and tore his tunic into strips. Then he bandaged her as well as he could.

Suddenly the child reached up and threw her arms about his neck. She kissed him. And Balloche, the murderer, blushed.

He sat down on the ground, holding the little body in his arms, and so she fell into a gentle sleep, with her hands firmly clasped around his neck, with her face on his shoulder.

And Balloche thought of years gone by. He remembered how his mother had caressed him when he had hurt himself, and how she had sung him to sleep.

And so there was Balloche, the Apache, the pride of the quarter of Saint Jean, gently rocking the child in his arms and singing in a cracked voice:

*"Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous, dormez-vous?"*

That evening, near a comfortable camp-fire of dry wood and thistles, the little girl told Balloche her story, with the help of many gestures and vivid play of hands and a few familiar Arabic words.

She and her father and mother had come from the north. They were poor Kabyles. They had only one dromedary between them. Then sickness had smitten them like a thunderbolt. First her father had died, then her mother. Then one night the camel had stumbled and broken a leg, and the jackals had attacked and devoured it. And she had lost her way. She had dragged her pained body through the pitiless sands, hungry, thirsty, suffering. Finally she had reached the edge of the forest. And now (she gave Balloche this to understand thoroughly) she was going to adopt him for good and he was never to leave her.

Balloche smiled. He caressed the

child. He spoke to her in quick, metallic French which made her laugh. Every day he massaged the swollen ankle and washed and bandaged the wounds, until after a week she was fit to move.

So they trekked.

He did not know where he was going, and he did not care. He had forgotten Marseilles. He had forgotten the quarter of Saint Jean, the Battalion d'Afrique, the desertion from the colors. He was not afraid of the future. He was full of courage, full of a new, sweet, strange joy. Food and water were plentiful. He still had his rifle and some ammunition. He shot a bustard and a few sand-grouse. There was an abundance of wild dates and olives and of chirimoyos.

And so they walked on. Often he carried the little girl high on his shoulders, singing ruffianly soldier songs which delighted her. She could never hear enough of them.

With much exertion he taught her a few French words. He blushed with pleasure when she called him "Brother, big Brother" in pretty, lisping French. And the day on which she said to him:

"Je t'aime bien, mon gars,"

was one of the happiest days of his life.

Of course, child-like, she took up the play. She taught him many Arabic phrases, words of the harem, pretty terms of endearment. And she clapped her hands and kissed him when he called her in broken Arabic:

"Oh thou piece of my heart . . .
oh thou soul of a thousand roses . . .
thou fragrance of three lily petals . . .
thou breaker of many hearts . . ."

Once or twice they saw villages at a distance, villages of black felt tents, arranged in a quadrangle, protected by narrow, waterless ditches

and by massive hedges of prickly-pear cactus and agave, matted together into great defensive barriers. But Balloche remembered his experience with the Berbers, and he left the villages to one side.

He kept on traveling South. He had a vague idea that somewhere there he would find a land which would welcome him . . . him and the little girl. There was never a doubt of this quest in his heart. His past life seemed washed clean by the dry, clear heat of the desert days, the biting chill of the desert nights. He had even forgot Canichon le Mak', the young brother whom he had loved with a peculiar, brutal love. There was nobody in all the world but the little child—"Aziza" she said was her name.

One night he made his camp in a deep grove of wild olive and cedar trees. He slept soundly and peacefully, the little girl clasped tightly in his protecting arms.

He awakened with a start. He felt that somebody was looking at him. Instinctively his hands reached for his rifle. He looked up.

Yes. There was somebody standing near him. Immediately he recognized the dress, the white tunic and white trousers, the tall red fez upon the head, the red cross upon the breast. It was one of the "*Frères Armés du Sahara*," the famed White Brothers of Algiers, the religious order of lay-brothers instituted by Cardinal Lavigerie.

His first thought was one of ridicule and contempt . . . why . . . the priest . . . the monk . . .

It was true that these Brothers carried weapons and that they had been known to use them. But what of it? . . . He measured the lean, thin figure of the man, and then he looked at his own broad hands, his muscular arms . . .

And then he saw the little girl

who was still sleeping quite soundly.

He remembered with a start what this stranger stood for. Why . . . he was France . . . he was law and order and retribution and justice and the court-rooms and jail . . . and perhaps the guillotine. Suddenly he thought of the murdered sergeant back there in Tunis, the plundered commissary tent, the desertion from the colors . . .

This man stood for it all, all.

Suppose he killed him? They would follow him. They would hound him and stalk him. They would get him in the end, and they would show no mercy. Formerly he had boasted of his contempt for death. He had spat at the guillotine. But now . . . there was that stray bit of humanity in his arms . . . and he loved her . . .

The Brother still looked at him silently. His practised mind and eye could read that a terrible struggle was going on in the man's heart.

He sat down with a word of greeting and spoke.

He spoke long and gently. And suddenly it seemed to Balloche that the vaulted holiness of the confessional was about him. Suddenly it seemed to him that a greater force was in his soul, loosening his tongue, making him speak. He knew that he must speak the truth.

And so he did speak the truth . . .

It was a long, gray story of crime and vice and foul desire, of robberies and theft and murder.

Then he spoke of the last few weeks, of the child, of his great love for her, of his vague idea that somewhere he would find a haven of rest for himself and for her . . .

"Yes, *mon père* . . . I thought in my madness that somewhere I would find a land that would welcome me . . . a land where I could bury my sins . . . my former life . . . where I could live cleanly . . . with her . . . with this little *gosse* . . ."

And he pressed her savagely to his heart so that she awakened with a little cry of pain.

The Brother was silent for a while. Then he spoke very gently.

"Yes, my friend. Somewhere you will find it, this land which you are seeking . . . somewhere in the South . . . where I also am going . . . to help, to comfort, to teach . . . perhaps . . . who knows? . . . to convert . . . Come you with me . . . you and the little one . . ."

And early the next morning the people of the village of Ouargla saw three strange figures disappearing on the horizon:

A White Brother of Algiers, a tall, broad-shouldered man, and between them, holding a hand of each of them, a little Arab girl.



A "GERMAN" SPY IN IRELAND

BY WARREN BARTON BLAKE

[A great many continental Europeans and not a few American citizens have been subjected to arrest, since the opening of the great war, at various places in Great Britain. Even Ireland shares the spy-excitement; in a private letter the writer of this lightly conceived sketch says that denouncing and arresting spies is the chief evidence Ireland has given of her newly-discovered loyalty to Britain. Mr. Blake's arrest at Cleggan, on the west coast of Ireland, and his detention at the nearby town of Clifden, occurred in August. He was obliged to appeal to the consular authorities at Dublin before the incident was finally closed. One of the accounts of his case in the "Irish Independent" notes that "in the possession of a man supposed to be a German, who was arrested at Cleggan, Galway, were found maps and drawings of various parts of the coastline."—EDITOR.]

WERE you ever a spy? If not, take a few weeks off sometime between now and the signing of peace at Berne, or Washington, or whatever other city is to have the honor of housing the peace-delegates at the close of the world's greatest war. Go to any country that has become mildly hysterical, and take photographs. That makes you a spy—especially if there are vigilant boy-scouts in the scenery.

It makes you a German spy, if you follow my directions somewhere in Great Britain and Ireland. I speak from experience. Have I not been arrested in just these circumstances? Only a few days after drilling with the Irish Volunteers by their local commander's special invitation, have I not been watched by the aroused villagers of Cleggan, on the west coast; questioned and then arrested by a young R. I. C. (Royal Irish Constabulary); examined by a sergeant; searched by order of a district inspector? Now, as a matter of personal history, my name is an Anglo-Irish name, and I have never thought of myself as looking very Teutonic. I never traveled in the Fatherland. I don't like frankfurters, and shun Limburger cheese as cats do puddles in a muddy road. When I studied German at the University, it was impossible for me to get better than passing marks in the

beastly subject, and at the present time the only German at my command is the phrase for "thunder and lightning." Some years ago I was a student in Paris, and idled there fully as much as I studied, and absorbed a good deal of French that isn't in the text-books. Being "run in" as a German spy is, therefore, hardly my idea of the King of Summer Sports—yet I don't know! It is worth a good deal in experience, granted captors as jolly and courteous as the R. I. C. But I am straying from my real point: the pleasure of being a spy in a friendly land.

It all begins, of course, with that picture you take when you drive by side-car to the seacoast upon a particularly balmy Sunday morning. Yesterday it rained, and it will probably rain again before the day is over (didn't I say this was Ireland?) but for the moment the sun bathes the whole countryside in delicious warmth and a glory of light. The scene is so peaceful: it is hard to imagine that men are battling by the million out there in Belgium—that men who never saw each other are trying to make orphans of one another's children, widows of one another's wives. The villagers lounge before the King's House, that is closed to-day to all except travelers who have come from at least three miles. Men are smoking their "Gal-

way clays"—that cost a half-penny each and are good value. Not everyone has got home from chapel yet—and one advantage of going to Claddaghduff to chapel is that Claddaghduff is more than three miles off—which makes churchgoers "travelers."

In the smoke-room here in this converted manor house, where everyone posts off to bed at an early hour, as one ought in the country, I have been browsing in an old sheep-bound copy of Montesquieu, in the edition *Londres, 1757*. It happens to be the volume containing the Persian letters, and this is the letter I open to:

Although I am not charged with any affair of importance, I am, however, continually occupied. I pass my life in examination; I write in the evening what I have observed, what I have heard during the day: all things interest me, all things astonish me: I am as a child, and my still tender organs are struck vividly by the least object.

So wrote Uskeb to Rhedi—and his letter pretty well describes the procedure that has interested the police in my experiences. But if you wish infallibly to be taken for a spy, you should specialize in sea-coast. It was at Brighton, England, that someone arrested Rudyard Kipling as a Teuton suspect—but for my part I prefer Ireland's shore to England's. And I know no coast that surpasses the west of Ireland—whatever your intentions. It is not only that Ireland's west coast is glorious by nature, fresh of air, rocky, mountain-girt, tinted with greens and browns and purples such as Robert Henri has shown in his Achill Island paintings, peopled with types that Jack Yeats has shown in his broadsides and cartoons—it is also that these shores are pricked here and there by the gigantic masts of Marconi stations, where wireless messages are plucked out of the air from all parts

and, more specifically, from the American side. This is an ideal spying ground for hardy vacationists, and is almost certain to yield prompt results. It only took one picture in my case to land me in the arms of the most conscientious, erect, and stupid police force I have ever met. But I must hastily confess my real incompetence to speak here with authority. I never did meet a police force before except, as it were, socially, unprofessionally, and in stories by Kipling and O. Henry.

There is no great fun in being arrested, perhaps. The excitement here is less than one might think. I should say it was rather less annoying than being importuned to stay to dinner by some too cordial hostess—when you have other plans. The fun, in both cases, comes afterwards. "Who are you?" asks the Sergeant, and, of course, you satisfy his curiosity. Equally, of course, he wants you to prove that you are just the man you say, and that means digging out your wallet and passing it over with some such words as these: "Here are my papers—help yourself." And then the sport begins. Talk about a schoolboy's trouser pockets—did you ever go through your own wallet very systematically? I never did before, and never realized what diversion it might afford myself and friends. Never again a dull moment on long railway journeys, or at the seashore of a rainy morning. I shall emulate the Sergeant at Cleggan and sternly demand of myself (or friends): "Your papers, please." It is an infallible and inexpensive pastime—better than Twenty Questions, Tit-Tat-To, or matching pennies.

Now, my wallet is fairly sizable, however small its pecuniary contents, and I put things into it at any time of day, but I never take them out again except when it is strictly neces-

sary. That, beyond cavil, is how things accumulate, and why there was such an array to entertain my Sergeant-friend. "What is this?" he asks when he finds some stock certificates that ought, of course, to be resting in a tin box in some safe-deposit vault, but which I carry round with my postage stamps on the theory that they are probably just about equally valuable. "And what is this?" he questions, when he happens upon some perfectly good United States bank notes done in green and yellow. There is nothing suspicious about things like these. But I tremble when he comes to a card of introduction—a card recommending me to the manager of a great string of newspapers, and, worse yet, a manager with a definitely German name—"von" and all. Providentially, the writing is bad and the Sergeant passes over the card as if it had been really quite neutral. I breathe easier. What almost queers me is some newspaper cuttings. These are easy to read, and so the Sergeant reads them; and one of them is an appreciation of German oysters by Mr. Philip Hale, best-read, wisest and most prolific writer in all Greater Boston. This is suspicious enough, and so is the clipping that quotes Victor Hugo as saying something or other, which he often did; and my Sergeant wags his head at Victor's name and says: "A German name." What use for me to explain that total misconception? I am but one—and there are five strong constables, all of the Sergeant's mind. I shiver to think what would have happened if my pocket contained something by Goethe—Goethe being the only German I could ever read except Heine, who really wasn't German at all—was he? But the worst document in my pocket anthology is a copy of two stanzas by the Belgian, Léon Montenaken:

*La vie est vaine:
Un peu d'amour
Un peu de haine
Et puis—bon jour.*

*La vie est brève:
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve
Et puis—bon soir!*

Ah, poetry is a dangerous commodity for a pedestrian's knapsack to contain. Plato did well to banish poets from his Republic.

One cannot do justice to all the pleasures of being a spy in Ireland. There are, for instance, one's letters—letters legible and illegible and hardly legible—and the Sergeant cannot make them out, and asks you to sit beside him on a bench in Barracks, and read them into his too receptive ear. I, for my part, had to read a sort of article in manuscript that way, and though I have often, before now, had to read my own articles, I never got half so much pleasure from it as when I could watch the effect of each sentence, each paragraph, each page, upon this listener. Never have I found, let me add, so ideal an auditor. He never wearied of my leisurely style, never protested that I went too much into detail, never criticised my grammar or said I use too many dashes (as Sandra complains), never once went to sleep over my parentheses. We exchanged cards afterwards, and I begged him to come to America so that we could do it often. But that was not till after I had enjoyed a nine-mile drive by side-car at His Majesty's expense, with constables in uniform, rifles slung on their shoulders, by way of courier and footmen. For my Sergeant was too knowing a person to release me till I had been searched and interrogated by his superior officer at District Headquarters. I hope District Inspector Barry

enjoyed my correspondence and liked my photographs of the folks at home.

The American citizen who is cast for the part of German spy has one more joy in Ireland. It makes him a local celebrity and he is sure of every attention at his hotel. He rings the bell—not Boots alone, but half the staff come scurrying with hot water cans, eager for first hand observation. At table he is served first and best and all the other guests watch him with expressions ranging from cold appraisal to sympathy itself. The rumor runs that you are still under arrest, although permitted to sleep at your hotel; and you half believe the rumor. Then there is the American lady, of the kind that travels widely while leaving Husband to enjoy New York by himself, who gives you a keepsake at first meeting—a thing she never would do in other circumstances. It is a pretty little American flag that you wear very gladly. For even the joys of vacation spying have their minor drawbacks.

Yes, there is danger of it getting on one's nerves. It is one's own fault, doubtless; one should enjoy the comedy to the very end, but there comes a time when one would like to be accepted at face value (not at *German* face value) by those in one's immediate vicinage. One would enjoy walking or cycling without having little groups of constables on bicycles acting as pace-makers, and secretive little detachments of constables in carts, serving as a kind of casual rear-guard—acting as companions and taking no end of trouble over it all. Good Americans do hate ostentation.

When I was a spy in Ireland (and it was only three days, too) I got really tired of it. There was one night here in the wilds of Connemara when eight wire-haired fox-terriers kept up an almost incessant barking

all night long. Every time I dropped off into sleep the chorus awakened me again—yet I couldn't swear at them, or throw boots through the window as in ordinary circumstances—for (who knows?) perhaps they were only protesting that the enemy should still be prowling round the premises, armed with night sticks, dark lanterns, revolvers, searchlights, bracelets, and trusty rifles.

And the final drawback is that the vacation spy spends his vacation in a country which is real country no longer—but only one continuous vaudeville. Comic opera is at times a restful pleasure, but, to my thinking, more properly an affair of winter evenings than of autumn nights.

Now, there is a serious side, too, to the kind of lark I have outlined here, and that is, it makes a lot of trouble for the friendly nation one is visiting. (By all means select an unmistakably *friendly* nation, and don't try Belgium, Germany, or Northern France: they are sometimes so hasty with spies on the continent!) It keeps the police busy and gives burglars almost too good a chance; it tires the telegraph wires, and the people in the post-offices who keep track of your letters. Also it makes well-meaning persons like my friend Sergeant Riley (family men with other duties to think of) wade through correspondence and half-cooked literature that really isn't intended for them and might even perplex their honest minds. Perhaps you would do better not to take your camera with you to Ireland, at this time; perhaps you had better see America first. For Americans ought really to spare their transatlantic friends all this derangement of usual routine. They have trouble enough as it is. They are in a blue funk lest their Austrian hair-dressers and German waiters (all of them spies, to be sure) should have sent home impor-

tant maps and military information before they were safely lodged in jail as suspicious aliens; they must even keep an eye on their own countrymen. I have just read a newspaper account of a Dublin medical practitioner who has been arrested for bidding good-bye to his family at Howth when going to the station for the ten o'clock train. He waved greetings to his wife and kiddies on the beach, and it was necessary that

so compromising an action be taken note of, and the military guard at Howth took him into custody and detained him for some hours at Barracks till fellow-practitioners had sworn to his identity and patriotism. At a time like this, when so many responsibilities weigh heavily upon the Government and all its agents, no good American should do anything to increase the burden laid on their tired shoulders.

THE SPARROW

BY THOMAS GRANT SPRINGER

AS the Millionaire reached the center of Madison Square, a breeze frolicked around the corner of the Garden, playfully snatched off the pompous gentleman's silk tile, and bowled it along the gravel walk. He gave chase, and the breeze, looking back to enjoy the Millionaire's discomfort, rolled the hat into a pair of somewhat shabby feet stuck straight out from one of the benches. The Millionaire made a fat lunge, seized the outraged hat, and sat down, puffing, on the bench beside the owner of the feet.

Recovering his breath at last he turned, wiping the ruffled nap with his sleeve.

"Much obliged, sir," he wheezed to the owner of the feet, who had never stirred.

A careless smile answered him.

"No thanks due, except to accident," the Young Man returned, languidly searching his pockets for crumbs of tobacco for a cigarette. The Millionaire disapproved of cigarettes.

"Can't I offer you a cigar, sir?"

he said, but the Young Man continued his search, not even glancing at the gay band which proclaimed the proffered weed to be far beyond his modest taste.

"Thank you, no; I'd best keep to my own vice," and he lit the thin paper roll, inhaling it with deep satisfaction.

The Millionaire studied him quizzically. He was lean and long with a certain careless grace in his lounging. No doctor had ordered him to walk down from upper Fifth Avenue to reduce a girth that threatened apoplexy. He was evidently not a confirmed idler, for there was an alert freedom about him, in spite of his careless attitude. His rather shabby clothes gave evidence of scrupulous care. He was clean shaven, and his hands were well kept. His eyes, under lazy, drooping lids, appeared to be keenly observant. Altogether he interested the Millionaire.

"It's a fine morning," he observed, deciding on a chat.

The Young Man affirmed it with

a nod that piqued the Millionaire. He was used to people hanging deferentially on his slightest statement and to have a statement slighted was too much for him.

"I said it was a beautiful morning," and there was a challenge in his tone.

The Young Man blew a thin spiral of smoke into the air, watched it slowly disappear, and then returned, "You repeat yourself, which is bad art."

The Millionaire snorted contemptuously and savagely bit the end of the declined cigar.

"Are you an artist?" he asked.

The Young Man smiled slowly. "That is a question the city editor and I were not able to settle. Therefore I find myself free of dull care."

"You're a newspaper man?" The Millionaire was determined to follow anything that promised to be definite. He put much faith in being definite.

"That was another point of disagreement between myself and the man on the desk."

"How's that?" his questioner pursued.

"Merely a paragraph," the Young Man replied, "a bit of art, a glimpse of a soul in a news story. But the city editor had no soul—so he cut it out. We discussed the matter, and, when a reporter discusses matters with his chief he usually figures on a holiday."

"I suppose you have something else in view?"

"No."

"What do you intend to do now?"

"Why, enjoy my holiday."

"You can afford it?"

"Certainly, I have a week's room rent paid, and something over five dollars in my pocket."

The Millionaire stared at him. "Do you mean to say you're sitting here doing nothing—enjoying yourself—with no more than that?"

"Why not?"

The trivial immensity of the problem struck the Millionaire speechless. In the silence that followed he studied the inscrutable face of the Young Man whose eyes seemed all at once to rivet themselves upon some object across the square and dwell there in dreamy speculation. The Millionaire's interest quickened. He looked, but could find nothing unusual across the square. Suddenly the Young Man shifted and spoke.

"Wonderful building, that—across there."

"It certainly is," the Millionaire was enthusiastic, now that he had found the Young Man's attention fixed upon something concrete, practical even. "That's one of the most valuable pieces of property in the city—worth several million—good central location—every office in it rented—how much now, off hand, would you say that building netted a month?"

The Young Man was looking at him with a queer half smiling expression.

"Haven't any idea," he said, "I was looking at the spire."

"The spire?" repeated the other. "What about it?"

"Oh, nothing in particular—just the look of it standing out there against the blue."

The Millionaire hesitated only an instant—then: "Everybody says," he agreed, amiably enough, "New York's skyline beats any other city in the world—but it's money that makes it—money and hard work and lots of it."

"But we don't have to think of that when we're looking at it."

"Some of us think of it!" almost shouted the Millionaire, thoroughly exasperated now. "Some of us *have* to think of it!"

"Yes," the Young Man spoke with vast and leisurely contentment, "yes,

I suppose somebody *does* have to—well,” he flecked the long ash from his cigarette, “I’ll never have that to bother me—my five wouldn’t go far toward building a skyline.”

“Young Man,” began the Millionaire, at the same time wondering why he allowed himself to be annoyed by this good-for-nothing idler, “I’ve seen a lot of young men go the way you’re going—what you need is responsibility—interest. Why, when I was your age I was married and started in business; that’s what settles a young fellow—responsibility. Now you ought to fall in love with some good girl—”

“Oh, but I *am* in love!” interrupted the Young Man.

“I’d like to see the woman,” said the Millionaire, taken back.

The Young Man turned his face away. “It is a magic day,” he smiled, “your wish is granted. Here she is!” and he nodded his head toward a young lady coming slowly along the walk.

The Millionaire’s first glance approved the Young Man’s choice. He edged away from his companion as the girl approached, for he felt suddenly an intruder. This tryst, then, explained the young fellow’s loitering.

The young woman passed close to them, her skirt almost brushing the Young Man’s shabby shoes. The millionaire listened for her greeting, but heard none. Then he realized that she had gone on, her steps had not so much as faltered before them. He turned. The ecstasy still lingered on the Young Man’s face as his eyes followed the girl’s retreating figure.

“Why—she didn’t *speak* to you!” gasped the Millionaire.

“Why should she?” His eyes were still following the girl. “What grace! What carriage! See the free swing of her walk—her face, like a flower turned toward the sun! And

now—she’s gone,” and he waved his hand as she disappeared around the corner.

“Why she didn’t look to me as if she even knew you!”

“Knew me? She didn’t—what difference? I loved her. While she filled my eye there was no other woman in the world.”

“Stuff!” snorted the Millionaire. “You don’t even know her name—chances are you’ll never see her again.”

“Well, what of it? See,” and the Young Man nodded his head down the walk again. “Here is another, more highly colored, cast in a smaller mold. See how she comes with nervous, graceful steps, quickening my heartbeats to keep pace with them. See that smile—I did not even have to win it. Some inner thought threw it for me to catch. and now—*she’s* gone, but Memory’s harem holds her, a free captive.”

The Millionaire frowned at him, but the Young Man’s face was free from any conscious flippancy.

“Is that what *you* call love?” he asked, scornfully.

“Real love,” the Young Man replied earnestly, “Love stripped of earth and made a thing divine. Rough hands would mar it.”

The Millionaire shook his head slowly. “I guess you’re a poet?” he said.

“I’ve scrawled a few rhymes now and then,” the Young Man answered.

The Millionaire studied him thoughtfully.

“I don’t know much about it,” he said slowly, “but I’ve heard that even that pays sometimes. Now, I like to see things develop. I’d like to see *you* develop.” He hesitated a moment, then, moved by a sudden impulse to discover if there might be any intrinsic worth hidden under this inscrutable exterior, he said: “I’ll make a proposition to you.”

"Well?" and the Young Man waited politely.

"Suppose for a year I set aside a certain sum that will let you do something with your talents without bothering city editors. Would you accept?"

The Young Man smiled and slowly shook his head.

"Why not?" demanded the Millionaire briskly. "If you met a man and took him to dinner because you wanted to see what was in him, you wouldn't think anything of it—neither would he."

The Young Man nodded an affirmative.

"Well," continued the Millionaire, "my proposition isn't any more than a dinner would be to you."

"Perhaps not," said the Young Man—then he pointed to a sparrow busily pecking at a crust dropped on the gravel walk. "You see that little fellow there? You can throw him crumbs and he'll whisk down after them, flirt his tail, chirp to you, and then he's off. He wouldn't be a pretty bird in a cage. He has no song, he only chirps and chatters in the clatter of the street."

"Then you—" began the Millionaire, somewhat uncertainly.

"I am his brother. I chirp and flit, and some way or other the city is bound to feed me, whether it will or no, just like him."

"But what good does he do?" objected the Millionaire.

"He lives," the Young Man replied, "possibly in the fullest sense. Men build cities that the sparrow may have a fitting habitation."

The Millionaire knit his brow and

scratched his head in some perplexity. "I can't see it in that light."

The Young Man smiled. "No more than you could see the skyline in mine. You helped build it. For instance, that spire that you appraised in dollars and cents, do you know that it is modeled after the Campanile—taken from an old world less hurried and more attuned to beauty than this new one of ours?"

The Millionaire shook his head, then glanced at his watch and rose swiftly.

"I didn't know it was so late," he said quickly. "Guess I've wasted enough time."

The Young Man gave him a compassionate glance. "Don't let me detain you—you have the world's work to do and I have only to consider the sparrow."

The Millionaire started down the walk with the haste of habit. A little way and he turned unconsciously. Then he glanced back. The Young Man had shifted to a more comfortable position. Idleness lay upon him like a caressing mantle. The gold of the sun, tempered by the man-made haze of the city, warmed his dreams. The Millionaire sighed and for the first time a sense of unconscious loss shadowed his world of gain. He turned to Broadway to hail a taxi. In the gutter a sparrow was taking a sun bath in the dust the passing wheels had ground. After all, was the Young Man not right, for did not the Millionaire's life-grubbing haste grind sun-warmed dust for idlers to loll in? And for the first time he, too, fell to considering the sparrow.



ALOYSIUS - BETTER BABY

by Ernest K. Coulter



Author of "Children in the Shadow" and Founder of the
Big Brother Movement

"**T**HAT baby's a pippin!"

A real mother never received her first born with more pride than did the pig-tailed, spindle-shanked Angelina when the Doctor after the daily inspection handed back to her the rosy-faced burden that was making her sway-backed. As she left the Neighborhood House she scarcely noticed the other mothers, big and little, who had come to have the medical men survey their progeny, for it was the last week of the baby contest.

Not that the Gas House District ordinarily took much interest in its babies. In fact it was the high infant mortality rate that led the Little Mothers' Aid to devise the contest. The babies nearest approaching physical perfection were to receive nest eggs in the form of money prizes to be held in trust accounts which would grow and could not be touched until the winner had reached that age which the law fallaciously calls maturity. The Little Mothers' Aid reckoned well when it put in that trust provision, for without it many of the winning babies would never see any evidence of the money prizes other than the foaming pints and fights that would immediately follow the awards.

Angelina first heard of the baby contest by accident. But she utilized that knowledge at once when she

learned that the "hookey" officer was on her trail. She decided that the health talks at the Neighborhood House would be a fine refuge for her and Aloysius; certainly the truant agent would never think of looking for her there. Not that Angelina would not have preferred school, at least she did before she met Aloysius, but her thrifty parents insisted that they needed the fifty cents a week she got for tending Mrs. Hennessy's baby. As the factory where Mrs. Hennessy worked required the mother's services at eight dollars a week, eleven hours a day, despite the labor laws, it will readily be seen that Angelina's routine did not fit in exactly with the plans of the Department of Education.

While there was great disparity in their ages, Angelina being eleven years and Aloysius eleven months, she was violently in love with her charge. And Aloysius flourished like a rose under her care, especially after Angelina heard the doctors tell how his food was to be prepared and had profited by it. It is true that Angelina did look at some of the babies who brought their lunches with them to the health talks in the shape of buxom mothers and wished she did not have to serve Aloysius's wants with anything as artificial as a bottle. But she had persuaded Mrs. Hennessy to save for three

weeks until she had \$1.16, and with it she bought a pasteurizer at a bargain store.

"Sure an' me mither nivir had no use for steam ingines when she was a-nursin' us," declared Mrs. Hennessy, "but it is true that Aloysius is a postoomis child, and me, his mither, a hard workin' woman, an' maybe, dearie, the docthers know best, though it is an awful ixpinse."

The nineteen pounds of Aloysius had tripled when Angelina turned into her tenement-banked street, where, between the hoarse bawlings of hucksters, the shrill cry of children and the mixture of alien speech one came into a veritable bedlam. But when she caught sight of a dreaded figure waiting within her doorway, she wheeled so suddenly her pigtailed stood out straight and she sped down a side street with an agility which showed that under fright her burden was a feather. She had discovered the attendance officer none too soon, for he was instantly after her in full swing.

"Old Pop" Hickey, as the youngsters of that district called him, was close to the retirement age, but there was nothing retiring about his legs. His quarries had learned through long experience that their only hope lay in leading him into hurdle events. So Angelina, with Aloysius clinging desperately to her, ducked into a dark hallway, dashed up the rickety steps, made the roof, rushed across a neighboring housetop to an open door into which she dodged, banging that and throwing the rusty hook onto the staple. She was descending to the street again when she heard the roof door rattling under Hickey's onslaught. She had thought that very day of taking a brick up there and banging that staple tighter in anticipation of just such an emergency. But Aloysius had occupied all her time.

When she heard the door give way she realized that she would have to drop her handicap if she was to keep her freedom, for Aloysius was growing heavy again. As she rushed into the crowded street once more Hickey was crashing down three steps at a time. Soon she saw him behind her. Aloysius was screaming, for she had wrenched his arms from her neck to prevent his cutting off her wind.

Isaac Levinsky, the clothing merchant, was, at the moment Angelina passed, pleading with arms extended to a customer who was haggling over the price of a pair of pants. Into those extended arms Angelina dropped Aloysius.

"Take him, Ikey, fer Gawd's sake! Here's de hookey cop!" And on the fugitive sped with redoubled speed.

This was evidently one of "Old Pop" Hickey's sprinting days. His hand was fairly on the shoulder of the fugitive when Angelina executed a *coup* that is to-day the talk of the Gas House District. The chase was leading them past a cellar excavation that a broken main had flooded. Angelina turned on Hickey and shouted into his face: "Go to hell!" and jumped boldly into the watery pit.

Angelina was not taking such a chance as it seemed. She had navigated a soap box boat across that lake only the day before, when with shoes and stockings off and dress hiked high, she had waded most of the way.

But evidently she had landed in a hole of some depth and as she disappeared beneath the surface, Hickey peering over the edge positively looked frightened at this apparent case of juvenile suicide. But Angelina had no thought of dying—there was Aloysius to look after even if there were no other bright pros-

pects on her limited horizon. Presently her head reappeared and after a lot of splashing she found a foothold sufficiently high to keep her mouth out. She spluttered in an effort to tell Hickey what she thought of him and words failing her she put her five digits to her nose and expressed it all by wiggling them violently at the confounded truant agent. The crowd that gathered on the sidewalk jeered Hickey. Then there was a commotion and Mrs. Hennessy burst through. She had quit work early and was on her way home when she heard that someone was trying to steal Aloysius.

"Where's my baby?" she demanded frantically.

Angelina pointed a dripping hand at Hickey. There could have been no better turn in the affairs of Angelina. The mother turned on Hickey with the fury of a cyclone. The temper of the crowd was such that he saw he would be one against a mob. As Mrs. Hennessy grabbed for him he dodged and in another instant was speeding down the street with a wildly excited crowd at his heels.

Aided by friends, Angelina was soon out of the cellar and was leading Mrs. Hennessy to Levinsky's second-hand clothing emporium, assuring the mother the while that Aloysius was safe. Levinsky was still holding the baby, his arms seeming to have been frozen into the same pleading fashion. He could do little more than look at Aloysius and exclaim:

"Gott in Himmel. Da bin ich noch Kindsmagd!"

"Shut up!" Angelina commanded as she took Aloysius from the clothing dealer and handed the baby to his mother. Angelina's recital of what had happened was frequently interrupted on the way to the Hennessy tenement by the mother hug-

ging Aloysius to her and exclaiming: "Praise be to the saints!"

Under the calming influence of a cup of tea which Angelina prepared after they reached the two dark rooms that constituted the Hennessy home, the mother realized that Angelina herself needed attention and sent her home. The little mother on her arrival at the parental domicile was promptly beaten by her mother who on seeing her wet clothing promptly declared that she had neglected the baby to play in the "mud-gutter." And as she laid on the last half-dozen strokes she vowed that if she lost her job with the Hennessy baby she'd have her sent away to a "collegio" which Angelina knew meant a place where bad girls were locked up. She cried herself to sleep and dreamed of Aloysius. She saw the baby-contest judges hand to her a bank book almost as big as herself and in which was recorded a vast fortune which her baby was to receive when he became a man.

The day of the final judging was approaching fast and Angelina's anxiety grew. She would creep into the Hennessy rooms by seven o'clock in the morning after a reconnaissance of the neighborhood to make sure that "Pop" Hickey was not about. Then Aloysius was loaded into a soap-box perambulator of Angelina's and Mrs. Hennessy's contriving, together with his impedimenta, including pasteurizer, bottles, a hair brush and other obvious things that go with a baby's wardrobe. Then came the exodus to the home of Mrs. Schilinsky, ten ten blocks distant, who in the emergency offered her roof to the fugitive and her charge. They always took to the side streets in going to and from their asylum. Then when Aloysius had been bathed and powdered and fed by the little mother

who inspected his anatomy with rigid care to see that no flaw had developed over night, they went to the roof, for the doctors at the better-baby talks were ever urging the necessity for fresh air. There she crooned him to sleep and placed him where the sun would not strike his eyes. As she watched she had day dreams of the prize and the pride with which she would hand it to Mrs. Hennessy.

A card came from the Neighborhood House telling the mothers of the "best babies" to present them on the afternoon of the day following for the final judging. With what joy the little mother read "best." Was not Aloysius without blemish and the prettiest of the lot? She had heard of "one-hundred-per-cent babies" and had faith that he was one of them. In the wardrobe of Aloysius when she hauled him to Mrs. Schilinsky's the next morning was a fresh frock and some ribbons that she long treasured against this day. Mrs. Schilinsky had gone to work and Angelina had sole possession of her two rooms.

As she undressed Aloysius to give him his bath she had a shock that jumped her heart into her throat. There standing out with vivid distinctness just above the armpit was a pimple! It was not much bigger than a pinhead, but it shone out against the white skin like the red light of an open switch—an open switch indeed, through which she saw all her hopes of the prize dashing off to destruction.

Had the doctors not warned them that a pimple would cut off five per cent? She had heard, too, that there were at least half a dozen babies who would score within two points of perfection and there were at least thirty out of the four hundred-odd registered that would go over the ninety-five per cent mark.

But it was a time for action and not for tears. How to annihilate that pimple?

She bathed it with cold water and then with hot, but in vain. She put salt on it and after it had dried carefully rubbed it off, with the result that it looked bigger than ever. The damned spot would not out. Aloysius accepted all this treatment quietly enough until she experimented with pinching; then he protested with lungs and legs. Angelina was desperate when suddenly there came to her the memory of a sign which she had seen in a window on her way to Mrs. Schlinsky's:

DR. ISAAC GOLDSTEIN
BEAUTY SPECIALIST
PIMPLES AND BLACK HEADS
REMOVED

She hastily dressed Aloysius, hurried him down to his chariot and soon was flying down the street to the beauty doctor.

Dr. Goldstein was standing in his window meditating on the lack of esthetic taste in the Gas House District when he was astonished to see the Hennessy equipage draw up and its motive power and mistress catch up a beaming youngster who had evidently enjoyed the ride. He saw her rush up the steps. There was a wild ring at his bell.

"Hey, are you de doctor what cures pimples?"

"Yes," replied the Doctor bending low, "dot was mine specialdty. Und who vas id?"

"It's Aloysius."

"Is id a lady or a gent?"

"It ain't neither, it's dis baby."

"Ach," exclaimed the Doctor, as light dawned on him.

"Look ahere," and Angelina hastily exposed the shoulder.

"A liddle ting like dot," he said; "why, I could take id off in a couple of days."

"A couple of days," gasped Angelina. "He's got to take the prize to-day!"

"Vot price?" asked the Doctor at once becoming very businesslike at the mention of anything that sounded like money. "Who is going to pay me?"

Angelina was somewhat taken back. She had never thought of money. She looked at the Doctor in a dazed fashion.

"I ain't got much," she finally answered as she sat Aloysius down, pulled a handkerchief from her apron pocket, unknotted it and revealed six cents. "I'll pay you de rest, Doc, hones', when Aloysius gets de prize."

"But my treadment, liddle girl, costs one tollar. Did you think I vas a shoe-shine shop?"

Angelina was close to tears. The Doctor was not altogether heartless. Adamant could not have withstood the pleading of the little mother as she poured out her tale and her aspirations.

"Vell, we see," finally decided the Doctor. "I got expensive equipmendts and all dot, but maybe you pays me vhen de liddle poy vins, yes?" The Doctor was a gambler.

He busied himself with an electric battery and after it was singing a high little tune, he told Angelina to press a sponge-tipped handle against Aloysius's arm while he would apply the smaller pole to the offending pimple.

Through all his trying experiences up to this time, Aloysius had conducted himself with rare fortitude, but at the first touch of that battery pole he let out a shriek that caused Angelina to drop her handle and look at the baby in dismay. Nor did he cease with escape from the current. On the contrary his wail rose in volume and pitch.

"Oh, my Gawd!" moaned Ange-

lina. "Now he's agoin' to upset his stomach and get a whole bunch of pimples!" She gathered up her charge and fled back towards Mrs. Schilinsky's.

One other hope had come to Angelina on her way back. Behind the clock on the front-room mantel was a tooth brush which Mrs. Schilinsky had confided to her she used only on state occasions. Angelina got this, made a thin mixture of flour and water and resorted, finally, to deception, for she gently applied this in an effort to conceal the spot. Then she anxiously waited for it to dry. First, the mixture was too thin and then too thick. Finally, after she got about the right consistency and it dried, she used a damp cloth about the edges. But still the white spot stood out accusingly in her eyes. Maybe the doctors would not notice it, but that was only a slight chance. The momentous time was at hand. Aloysius must go to be judged.

The Doctors must have noticed her drawn look as she sat there waiting among the other mothers, foster and real, for they called her early. Their inspection of Aloysius and what passed between them was behind closed doors. The results would be announced and the prizes awarded in one week.

Between her dodgings of "Pop" Hickey and her anxiety over the results of the contest it was not a happy week for Angelina and, perversity of fates, that miserable pimple passed as suddenly as it came. Two days after the judging there was not a trace of it. Then came notice to attend the announcement of the winners and the giving of the awards. The Congressman of the Gas House District was there to make a speech and the Commissioner of Health was to award the prizes.

The Neighborhood House was thronged on that eventful day with mothers and babies of all sizes and nationalities. A few proud fathers had even left off work to come, each confident that his offspring was a prize winner. Angelina sat with Aloysius beribboned and beaming three rows from the front.

"What a wonderful baby!" exclaimed one of the ladies of the Reception Committee. "Surely he'll get a prize." She did not notice Angelina gulp nor the tight look about her mouth.

The President announced as a preliminary to the ceremonies that if any mother whose baby took a prize or award was prevented from being present and had been unable to send a substitute, the Little Mothers' Aid would undertake to see that the prize or award was delivered later.

Then came the Congressman's chance. With oratorical flourish he began to play sixteen variations on the theme that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation. Patient mothers strove to keep their youngsters from punctuating the distinguished gentleman's remarks with goos and gurgles. A warning wail finally gave notice to the Congressman to stop rocking the cradle and let the nation take care of itself. Anyway, that audience was there for business.

The Health Commissioner used better judgment. He went straight to it. He took the first bank book from the pile and held it up and announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that the first prize goes to Nathan Waxman."

Angelina could have screamed. Only a week ago Aloysius had that Waxman baby entirely outclassed. Amid wild applause Mrs. Waxman moved forward. The Health Commissioner handed the bank book to

her and took Nathan from her arms to hold up for the crowd to admire.

"The little runt!" muttered Angelina jealously.

"Mary Doyle" came next and that did not wrench Angelina so violently as there was some satisfaction in knowing the Irish were not altogether out of it. She fidgeted on her chair, blind to everything except the little pile of bank books and the engrossed certificates of merit which were the second prizes. Angelina had abandoned hope of a bank book, but surely she would get one of those certificates on which Aloysius's name would be engrossed.

The Health Commissioner explained that an oval space at the top of the certificate around which romped a band of rollicking cherubs had been provided for the baby's photograph.

"What a pleasure it will be to you mothers in after years," said the Health Commissioner by way of letting the second prize winners down easily, "to look at that picture of your baby as he was on this eventful day."

The name of Aloysius was not called first, nor second. Indeed it dawned on Angelina that he might not even get an award.

"Albert Hemmingway!" My, what a start that name gave her. "Albert Hemmingway!" again called the Commissioner, searching the crowd for the lucky mother. Evidently she had to work and there was none by whom she could send her baby.

Suddenly an irresistible force was pushing Angelina into the aisle and marching her forward. Something kept clamoring to her that Aloysius deserved a certificate, if not a money prize, and she was going to have it.

"Oh, there you are, Albert!" and the Commissioner patted Aloysius on the cheek and handed the cer-

tificate to Angelina. There was so much confusion that the deception was unnoticed, and Angelina marched back down the aisle and out of the Neighborhood with Aloysius and the award grasped tightly to her without question. Somehow she felt she was only taking what was her right. In fact, she should be carrying a bank book instead of a certificate back to Mrs. Hennessy. She sat down in a convenient doorway to recover her breath. Furtively she opened the certificate. There was the place for the picture and it occurred to her how happy Mrs. Hennessy would be to see Aloysius's beaming face there. She knew Mrs. Hennessy could not read the name, which had been entered in elaborate Gothic, but how she would enjoy that picture. There was an "art studio" on Third Avenue where they supplied "a handsome cabinet photograph" for twenty-five cents. Angelina had received her weekly wage of fifty cents from Mrs. Hennessy that morning and with full knowledge of the chastisement she would receive when she failed to turn over to her parents all the money, she went to the art studio and had Aloysius photographed. It was one of those places where they made pictures while you waited.

What was Mrs. Hennessy's delight when she arrived home that evening to see smiling down on her out of a frame of an old mirror that was so cracked it was no longer of practical or artistic use the smiling face of her son and heir, surmounting a very conventional document with a big red seal and inscribed verbiage that was entirely beyond Mrs. Hennessy's ken. But the photograph and the seal told her the story.

"The saints be praised and the darlint gets his lines in spite of the spalpeen pimple!"

She hugged both Angelina and Aloysius in one great embrace. Angelina was not as joyous as she might have been, but Mrs. Hennessy's enthusiasm was too great for her to notice that.

It was late when Angelina crawled into her home that night. She had hoped to delay the reckoning until morning, but the paternal ear heard her as she tiptoed across the floor and the paternal hand caught her by the hair and demanded the week's wages. Yes, and when only twenty-five cents was forthcoming that same hand beat her until she was too exhausted to beg further for mercy. Though both parents threatened to throw her into the street next morning she would make no explanation of the missing quarter other than she had "spent it." When she dragged herself to her shake-down it was not to sleep, but to lie wide-eyed and speculate on the chances of her fraud escaping detection.

In response to Mrs. Hennessy's invitation the neighbors called on Sunday to see the certificate. They looked wisely at the writing and were enthusiastic in their admiration of the photograph. Angelina watched from the hallway and secretly rejoiced that most of them could not read, or at least that they could not decipher the name in Gothic. To her it stood out like a church. As long as the art inspection was open only to adults she did not fear particularly, but when Isidore Glickstein, a bespectacled student of ten, remarked after a close study: "I guess they got the name mixed," Angelina promptly led him into the hall and twisted his nose. Thereupon Isidore went into the next block and told the boys Mrs. Hennessy could fool the other neighbors but she couldn't fool him and that the "diploma" was a fake. It was the Hemmingway's block and the news traveled fast.

Mrs. Hemmingway on her very first day off had visited The Little Mothers' Aid to see where Albert had finished. According to the records Mrs. Hemmingway had received a certificate.

"It's divil of a certificate I got," declared Mrs. Hemmingway. "Someone has robbed my baby!" and Mrs. Hemmingway rolled up her sleeves. Her fury grew while the office was ransacked for the missing document and she went home vowing vengeance. All the Hemmingway progeny, and they came close to a dozen, were called about her in a council of war. Then spoke up Patrick Hemmingway, a friend of Issy Glickstein, and the latter's story lost nothing in the repeating.

"Bring your father, Patrick," directed Mrs. Hemmingway. Hemmingway, the father, who stoked in the gas house, did not have his usually irascible temper improved by being awakened, but it was apparent that for offensive work he would be all the better for that. Then the Hemmingway forces marched on the Hennessy castle.

Standing in rapt admiration before the certificate in the Hennessy home was Thomas, the twin brother of the late Hennessy.

"It's an angel," declared Hennessy, "and the picture of his mither, for the Hennessys were nivr much on looks." Sufficient time had not passed since the father of Aloysius had passed for the twin brother to pay more direct admiration to the widow. Certain neighbors had predicted, however, that the widow would no sooner lay away her little crêpe toque than she would be asked to marry again without changing her name. She was comely, was Mrs. Hennessy, and as Thomas had declared she was "used to the Hennessy ways."

A knock at the door and the Hem-

mingways, headed by the father, marched in. Mrs. Hemmingway went straight to the certificate, then commanded:

"Patrick, read that to your mother."

Here was the opportunity for young Patrick to shine. With high pitched voice and important manner he read very distinctly:

"This is to certify that there has been awarded to Albert Hemmingway——"

The reading went no further. Mrs. Hemmingway straightway tore the certificate from the wall. Mrs. Hennessy snatched it from her. Hemmingway leaped into the fray. That was just the chance for Thomas Hennessy to prove his devotion to his brother's widow. He sent Hemmingway sprawling. Before the Hemmingways knew it they had been thrown out of the Hennessy apartment and the door had been shut in their faces.

"Sure, and it's good team work we do, Mrs. Hennessy," commented Thomas, preening himself.

"It is," replied the Widow Hennessy as she smoothed her rumpled hair and looked for new worlds to conquer.

Meanwhile, Angelina, who had shot out of the house on the appearance of the Hemmingways, was speeding through the streets towards the Little Mothers' Aid. Panic-stricken, disheveled, breathless, she was within a block of the Neighborhood House when she rushed into the arms of Dr. Harmon, the chief of the better-babies doctors. He was coming from an errand of mercy in one of the tenements and was stepping into his machine.

"Fer Gawd's sake, Doc, come quick!" she cried, white-faced and quivering. "They're killin' one another down at Mrs. Hennessy's, all 'cause I wanted my kid, Aloysius,

to win and I swiped Mrs. Hemmingway's lines."

She gulped, clasped her hands and burst forth again:

"Hones', Doc, I didn't mean to hurt nobody. Oh Gawd, I wisht I never was born."

Then Angelina usurped a prerogative of her older sisters' and fell fainting. As the Doctor caught her and lifted her into the automobile he felt her head. "This youngster's all in," he muttered.

The Doctor knew Angelina, he knew her disappointment, and he knew Mrs. Hennessy, for he had brought her baby into the world. He told the chauffeur to drive fast to Mrs. Hennessy's house. He picked up a policeman in the last block and he took care of the Hemmingway clan who had just made a rush up the stairs demanding vengeance. It required some vigorous and reassuring language before the Doctor could penetrate the barriers being raised by the Hennessys, bachelor and widow, against their foes. But when Mrs. Hennessy saw Angelina, the Amazon was melted at once into a sister of charity, and the good woman forgot all about the hostile hordes that threatened her borders.

The Doctor had guessed most of the story, but as they worked over the white-faced patient Mrs. Hennessy supplied the missing details.

"Here, Hennessy," said the Doctor, "this is a prescription I want filled. Take the car and tell the

driver I want it quick." And the Doctor scribbled a line to the Little Mothers' Aid. It read: "Send by bearer one blank certificate of merit in baby contest."

Hennessy was back within a few minutes with the blank certificate.

"Now, Mrs. Hennessy, let me see your baby," commanded the Doctor.

And the mother left the patient long enough to produce Aloysius.

"Strip him," directed the Doctor.

Hennessy discreetly retired.

"Umph," said the Doctor. "Nothing wrong with that baby. Should have had a prize."

Then the picture was transferred from the stolen certificate to the new one and the policeman was called in and told to return the Hemmingway award to the rightful owners, who went away with a triumphant cheer just as Angelina opened her eyes.

The first thing they rested on was a certificate of award which the Doctor had filled in with his own hand to Aloysius Hennessy.

"You see, little girl," said the kindly Doctor, "your baby won after all."

And as Angelina's eyes brightened and she clasped the Doctor's hand, Hennessy whispered to the widow:

"An' whin you can in dacincy, will you become Mrs. Hennessy again?"

The widow blushed: "Hennessy, you're a good man," she said.





The Prosecuting Witness

by Fleta Campbell Springer

"IF you put me on the witness stand, I shall lie."

The District Attorney looked at his wife incredulously. It was the third time she had said that, and he began to believe she meant it. Of course she did not realize what she was saying.

"You can't be sentimental about such things, Anne," he told her; "you know the fellow's not worth lying for, and you know his wife would be better off without him."

Mrs. Barnes only shook her head and answered, not at all argumentatively, but as if stating a decision about which there was no question in her mind.

"I will not betray her confidence. When she came to me and told me what she did, it hadn't ever occurred to her that I was the wife of the District Attorney. She came to me because I was the only woman she knew, because we lived in the same town when we were girls. Why, Jim, you have no more right to take advantage of my confidence than I have to betray hers."

"I have no right to withhold information that will convict a thief." He made a quick characteristic gesture of impatience. "You must not forget that I'm a public official, sworn to do my duty. I *must* call you as a witness—your testimony will convict him."

"You mean it would, if I told the truth."

As Prosecuting Attorney he was

exasperated beyond measure; as the husband of Anne Barnes he could not help being amused. The situation was so ridiculous, and at the same time so serious. Here was his wife in possession of the most damaging evidence, calmly defying him to call her as a witness. Anne was usually such a sensible person. She was not given to sentiment.

"You women have queer ideas of honor," he said.

"Is it queer to want to be what you men call 'square'?"

"Don't you see, Anne, that when it comes to a matter of law—"

"Oh the *law*—what do I care for the law? You men positively *worship* the law!"

"But you don't seem to realize what it means to commit perjury."

"I'm a friend of the District Attorney!" She smiled brightly at him, as if she had won a final point.

While he was thinking up an answer to such an absurd line of argument, the telephone bell interrupted them, and he turned to answer it.

"What?" he said into the receiver, "already in session! I'll be over right away; just arranging for some important evidence." He snatched up his hat, and began hurriedly shuffling papers into his portfolio.

"I'm late now, Perkins says," and as he started out of the side door he looked back hopefully. "Don't be foolish, dear; people often have to tell things in court that they'd rather not—"

"You really intend to call me, then?"

"Not of course unless we see the case is lost without your evidence. You'll come if I send for you, won't you?" He kissed her lightly, as she came over beside him.

"I can't refuse to go, you know, if they come for me," she said with rather more good nature than he had expected.

"Oh, you'll be all right once you're on the stand," said the District Attorney confidently, as he hurried down the side steps. "Goodbye!" and he was gone. She watched him out of sight.

It had been only the month before that Myra Owens had come to her with her trouble. She had been married but a year, and Anne Barnes remembered her as the shy little school teacher in the town where they had both lived as girls. Myra had married Bob Owens, a ne'er-do-well, against everybody's wish but her own. He managed to eke out a poor sort of living for them on a clerk's salary, and Myra believed in him and was happy enough. Then he had begun bringing home mysterious sums of money, and telling her to put them away and say nothing of it. This had happened several times, and when she had questioned him he had answered her brutally that it was none of a woman's business where a man got money. She was a pitiful little figure as she told her story; she clung so desperately to her faith in her husband; yet she was afraid trouble would come of it, and she had come to ask advice of Mrs. Barnes because she knew no one else in the town and she remembered how kind Anne Barnes always had been to everybody at home.

Mrs. Barnes had been deeply touched by the confidence, and that night she had told her husband, with never a thought of his office.

Then suddenly had come the arrest of Owens on the complaint of his employer, charging him with systematic theft. The case was set for an immediate hearing—and now the thing she had feared had come, her husband, in his absurd devotion to the law, had conceived it to be her duty to divulge what the wife of the accused man had told her.

At half-past two the deputy came with the summons. She acknowledged the service, and told him she would be at the court-room as soon as possible. Then she dressed with deliberate care.

As she gave her nose a final puff of powder, she laughed confidentially to her reflection in the mirror. She was thinking about the majesty of the law—and she laughed!

The Judge was reading in a sustained monotony of voice when she came into the court room and made her way quietly to a seat just back of the District Attorney. Turning, he greeted her with a smile that was a bit uncertain. She returned it with one so frank and friendly that he was sure she meant to tell the truth—and the next moment he wondered what it meant.

Opposite sat the defendant, and on either side his wife and counsel. In appearance he was just the sort of man one would suspect of petty thievery—slight, sandy haired, with shifty, light blue eyes, and he seemed to enjoy the notoriety of the affair. He paid not the least attention to his wife, who listened intently to everything that was being said. When she saw Mrs. Barnes she gave a little start, and the smile of recognition froze suddenly as she realized what her presence in the court room might mean.

Anne Barnes's lips tightened just perceptibly as she saw it.

"Call the next witness," said the Judge, settling back.

"Mrs. Barnes, will you take the stand, please?" It was the District Attorney who spoke. Mrs. Barnes went up to the witness's chair and faced the court room composedly.

"Has the witness been sworn?" asked the Judge.

"She has not," answered the District Attorney, with emphasis.

"Swear the witness, Mr. Clerk."

Anne Barnes's voice when she responded "I do" to the oath was clear and unfaltering; then she seated herself in the witness chair.

The District Attorney felt relieved. He had been foolish to let Anne's talk worry him at noon. Women, he had found, were always bold enough beforehand, but when it came to taking the solemn oath, that was a different matter; then, too, they were impressed by the dignity of a court of law. He was grateful to Anne for coming round to the right view so gracefully. But then he could always depend upon her to do the sensible thing.

"Proceed with the examination."

He cleared his throat.

"State your name in full, please," he said, without looking up from his papers.

"Anne Melinda Barnes." She gave the information pleasantly.

"And you reside at 247 Tenth Street?"

"I do."

Something in the readiness of her answers disconcerted him. He began to be a little afraid of what she was going to do. He continued to be very much engrossed in his papers. She was *too* pleasant; he was thinking that he should be a bit more severe and dignified and his next question was put mechanically:

"—And your relation to me, I believe, is that of wife?"

Anne did not smile. She only hesitated a second before she answered with perfect gravity:

"It is." No one else seemed to have noticed what he said.

"Are you acquainted with the wife of the defendant, Mrs. Myra Owens?"

"I am."

"How long have you known her?"

"About fifteen years."

"Intimately?"

"No—" the witness paused, then added quietly, distinctly, "but we have always been friends." As she spoke her eyes sought those of Myra Owens, who was leaning forward now in an agony of suspense. There was no time for the District Attorney to analyze the new tone in his wife's voice. She must be treated as any other witness.

"How often have you seen Mrs. Owens within the past year?"

"Two or three times, perhaps."

"Where?"

"On the street."

"By appointment?"

"No, by chance."

"Has Mrs. Owens ever called upon you in your home?" He asked the question casually. The witness looked first toward the wife of the defendant, and then squarely into the eyes of the District Attorney.

"No," was her answer, calm and clear. The District Attorney's face went white.

"Never?" The word was a command. A faint movement came from the direction of the defendant's wife.

There was no change in the expression or voice of the witness.

"Mrs. Owens has never visited me in my home." The answer was quiet, deliberate; final.

The District Attorney's hand trembled as he began rearranging his papers. It was monstrous! She, his own wife, had dared to make a mock of the law, of his duty, and all for the sake of keeping faith with an insignificant, silly weakling of a woman, the wife of a common thief. It

was true, then, that old tradition of the law, that no oath is sacred to a woman; women were always clogging the wheels of justice—they were incapable of reason—they had no stamina where their sentiment was concerned.

Someone touched him lightly on the shoulder; he turned to meet the stricken eyes of the defendant's wife. She was bending close; her hand, clutching the back of his chair, almost shook him with her trembling. Her eyes were tragic, commanding.

"I won't have her do that for me," she was saying in a low vehement whisper, "I'll tell myself—everything I know—*anything*—but I won't let *her* do that!"

The spectators and court officials looked on in mild curiosity. They could not hear what was being said, and there had been nothing to indicate a climax, or even a crisis in the rather dull proceedings. Bob Owens watched his wife with dull satisfaction. She was a clever woman—she had been a teacher—likely she had thought of some scheme to turn the tables in his favor.

The District Attorney was struggling to comprehend.

"It will convict him," he told her, impelled to warn her half against his will, and in tones as guarded as her own.

"That's what you want, isn't it? That's why you made *her* come?"

"You mean you will testify?" It was unbelievable.

"Yes, if you'll let her go now."

"Sit down a moment, then," he said, and she sank obediently into the chair lately occupied by Mrs. Barnes.

Then the District Attorney turned to the witness.

"That will be all," he said.

The counsel for the defense, a mild, slow-thinking man, looked from the prosecutor to the witness inquiringly. He had been able to make ab-

solutely nothing of this last turn in the case. Why had the prosecution called Mrs. Barnes to the stand, only to dismiss her again with nothing at all gained by her testimony. There had been nothing brought out in the direct examination to refute, and he could think of nothing to ask, so he simply said: "No further questions."

The Judge turned smiling to the witness. "You may go, Mrs. Barnes," he said, and then added at once:

"Call the next witness."

"Mrs. Myra Owens, take the stand."

The Judge looked up over his spectacles suddenly; the defendant's head went forward and into his pale eyes leaped a gleam of suspicion. Counsel for the defense sat up, helplessly alert, then, as Mrs. Owens started forward, he suddenly remembered his duty and got quickly to his feet.

"I object," he began hurriedly—"to the wife of the defendant—"

"The witness volunteers, your Honor," interrupted the District Attorney.

"Proceed," ordered the Court, and Mrs. Owens, trembling slightly and very pale, faced the court room. She made her response to the oath in a voice that was self-contained and unwavering, though scarcely audible.

When the District Attorney said, more gently than usual, "Be seated, please, Mrs. Owens," she sat down on the edge of the witness chair, tense and rigid.

"Your name is Myra Owens, and you live at 594 Hill Street, this city? Is that correct?"

"It is, yes, sir," she answered. Her hands twitched nervously.

"And you are the wife of the defendant?"

"Yes, sir." Her replies came hurriedly, as if she were eager for the next question.

"Kindly state, if you know, what

salary your husband was receiving for his services at the time of his arrest?"

"Sixteen dollars a week," answered the witness.

Bob Owens, watching first the questioner and then his wife, was divided between suspicion of her motive and confidence in his own power over her. It had served him well in the past, and no doubt she was only proving it anew.

"Was that amount sufficient for the living expenses of yourself and your husband?"

"Yes, sir, it was."

"Did you save anything out of the salary?"

"No, sir."

"Nothing at all?"

"Nothing at all." She had begun to see the drift of his questions.

"State whether or not your husband has ever brought home any sum or sums of money other than his salary?"

A stir ran through the audience, and the defendant's chin went forward again menacingly. The answer came, low and distinct, in the midst of a sudden curious hush.

"He has, yes, sir."

An ugly snarl of rage escaped the prisoner, and a deputy moved a step nearer him. The spectators craned forward to see what promised to be a lively scene; a wife voluntarily betraying her husband—they had expected no such diversion.

"State when, please," came the next question.

"At different times." She seemed to have gained strength now that she was in the midst of it, now that they knew what it was she intended to do. She gave one half frightened, half defiant glance in the direction of the prisoner, and then appeared to brace herself for the ordeal.

"State if you know what he did with that money?"

"He gave it to me."

"Were the sums large?"

"Yes—they were large sums."

"Do you know where your husband obtained that money?"

"No, sir, I don't know."

"Did you ask him?"

"I did."

"And what was his answer?"

The woman looked appealingly at her husband, and his face was livid with hate.

"He said—that it was none of my business where he had got the money."

And so the questions went on, and so she answered them, telling only the pitiful, shameful truth, until at the end of ten minutes she had laid bare every detail of the miserable secret she had guarded through many long, black months. And through it all Anne Barnes sat leaning forward, breathless, her hands clasping and unclasping, her eyes shining through a mist that blurred her vision. Now and again the prisoner moved and muttered savage, threatening gutturals, like an animal caught in a trap.

Her testimony was conclusive, damning, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty without leaving the box. Then, as the witness rose from her chair, she swayed uncertainly and before they could reach her side she had gone down in a huddled heap to the floor. Anne Barnes was at her side instantly, and the Judge ordered the crowd kept back, and the unconscious woman carried into his rooms.

When finally she opened her eyes, she smiled faintly up into Anne Barnes's earnest face, then remembering, she started and looked about apprehensively:

"Tell me," she pleaded anxiously, in a weak, uncertain voice, "tell me, it didn't make any trouble between you, did it? When I saw him look at you as if he was angry, and still you

wouldn't tell, I knew you'd had trouble over your coming to-day—and he wasn't worth it, Bob wasn't—" She was clinging desperately to the hot, moist hand that held hers. Then the door opened and closed again; the District Attorney had come in softly and was standing by his wife's side.

Myra Owens reached out with her free hand imploringly.

"Please, Mr. Barnes," she said, "don't blame her for not wanting to tell—you know Bob wasn't worth it—but she just did it to shield me—you see, we were girls together back home—" she seemed to grow suddenly weak again, "and women, you know, women don't know much about the law—we only know about—about friendship—and—"

"And honor, Mrs. Owens," finished the District Attorney, in a significant tone.

They were half through dinner that night before the District Attorney ventured upon the subject that had been harassing his mind all the afternoon. They were still talking of the trial and its outcome. Anne was expressing her very great satisfaction, and something she said gave him his opening. He decided to have it out at once.

"But can't you see, Anne, it was *perjury* just the same!"

"Why Jim—" He caught the reproach in her look and broke in, intent upon making her understand.

"I know, I know—the law's not infallible, but it's the thing that holds society together, and surely we owe it at least respect—"

"Certainly dear," his wife's quiet voice interrupted, "that's just the way I felt about it—"

"What!" the District Attorney burst out in astonishment. "Then why in Heaven's name did you go calmly on the stand to-day and deny the truth?"

"I didn't."

For an instant he looked at her, without speaking—then:

"Well I must say, Anne, I don't exactly follow you to-day. You surely did deny—and most emphatically—that Bob Owens's wife had ever come to you for advice about that money."

"Why Jim dear, you didn't ask me that *at all*! You asked me if she ever *called on me in my home*—you were particular about that—and you know she never did; the day she told me all that I had just started down town to do some shopping, and I met her at the gate, and it was such a lovely morning that we walked on over to the little park—she went on home after we had our talk, so you see she really never was inside this house!"

The District Attorney had listened in an amazed silence, and for a long moment after she stopped speaking and sat watching him with that agrieved expression, he still said nothing; then without taking his eyes from her face he began very softly to whistle a foolish little comic opera tune.

When he had whistled it through to the end, he said in his most casual tone of voice:

"Come down to the office with me in the morning, will you, Anne?"

"Why?" she asked, wondering at his change of manner—"anything important?"

"I just wanted somebody to help me dig up a technicality or two in that Spadoni case," he said.

THE GREATEST OF THESE

BY SALLY PETERS

Hjalmar Björsted had been playing, and the composition was a thing of pure sentiment. Miss Sherwin did not believe in sentiment. In her experience it didn't work out. Never had she known of a simon-pure love proposition brought to a satisfactory conclusion—that is, from a simon-pure love point of view. True, her experience had not been personal. She had refused to have any. That of her family and friends had been too poignant.

So when the last eloquent strains of Grieg's "Ich Liebe Dich" died away, and Hjalmar Björsted had turned to her with an expression as eloquent as his music, her face appeared as cold and forbidding as her heart was warm and pleading. And shortly after he had made a rather stiff bow of farewell.

Several years had passed since then, and during all that time Miss Sherwin had been lonely with the kind of loneliness that hurts. During the day she kept busy, and filled her thoughts with matters that she tried to make insistent. But at night, with the distraction of the day's work impotent, out of the darkness would leap scene after scene from away back beyond the blank years of her loneliness, back to the rose-colored time when romance had been a real thing to her vision, and life had been almost too quiveringly beautiful. Then a pair of steady blue eyes would gaze wistfully at her from under the overhanging brows that a sea-faring nation is apt to bestow upon her sons, and the pain in them would make Miss Sherwin bury her

face, and sometimes sob, in her pillow.

One charming spring day when a soft breeze was persuasively calling to all the sleeping forces in nature to awaken and make the world new, she walked briskly eastward on a crowded street until she came to the Nazareth Day Nursery. This institution was her safety valve and her justification in life. She liked to explain that instead of ministering to a tiny home circle of her own she was assuming the burden of sixty mothers at a time when they were helpless to carry it themselves.

There was only one flaw in her satisfaction. The youngsters did not love her, and she just could not make them. When Mary, the nursemaid in charge of the infants' room, appeared, she was immediately smothered with violent hugs; when Miss Sherwin approached, without ceremony the children ran away. Even now as she neared the building the face of Minnie Grogan was for an instant pressed against the window of the matron's office. Miss Sherwin smiled and nodded. Without an answering greeting of any description the child vanished, and was nowhere to be seen when her benefactress entered.

To Miss Sherwin's sensitive appreciation spring seemed as omnipresent within the Nursery as without. The rooms were all in gala array. The floors glistened, the chairs stood expectantly in rows; festoons of paper chains swayed gently from the chandeliers; the canaries were thrilling their very cheeriest fugues as if to tell all the world that to-day

was the day of the annual reception, the fête day of the year.

She inspected each detail of preparation anxiously. A grand piano lounged in black magnificence in the corner of the kindergarten usually devoted to the work tables. She tried its tone with care, for one of the most famous sopranos in the world was to sing for the children that afternoon, and she must have worthy accompaniments. The instrument proved perfect, but Miss Sherwin did not linger over its keys. Since that night several years before music had meant to her just that one song, and Miss Sherwin did not believe in sentiment.

As she climbed the stairs a smothered giggle above her was followed by a startled exclamation. Then,

"Well, Minnie Grogan, ain't you the clip!" Mary remonstrated in her soft brogue.

"I love you, Mary," purred the child, and Miss Sherwin watched as the nondescript mite fondly nestled close to the nurse's side.

"Sure ye *do*! What will you do whin I go 'way from here. Who'll you love then?"

It was Minnie's turn to gasp, but the teasing twinkle in Mary's eye reassured her.

"G'wan! You ain't goin' away!" she grinned.

"But whin I do, what then? Don't you suppose I'm ever goin' to get married at all at all?"

"Don't you do it, Mary," solemnly abjured the child. "It's hell."

"Black shame on you for swearin' like that! Where do you expect to go whin you die?"

"I don't care. I tell you it's *hell*. Ain't my mom tried it twict?"

"Weren't her men good to her?"

"Oh, she ain't *a'scared* of my pop. But he's forever runnin' off, leavin' her to hoe it alone; then gettin' beat up and comin' home for babyin'.

And she's always there with bells on when he does."

"My, my, but it do be a hard world!" sighed Mary.

"Yep," agreed seven-year-old Minnie.

Miss Sherwin shivered. She did not believe in being philosophical about such conditions. Why did women like Minnie's mother marry? And why of all things did they marry specimens of the ilk of Grogan? Mary, at least, was too nice a girl to become that sort of wife, and Miss Sherwin had noticed with grave uneasiness that for some weeks past young Terry Riordan had walked two blocks out of his way from the machine shop on the Avenue to grin fondly at the windows of the infants' room. Something must be done; Mary must be saved before she became a victim to her weak, temporary sentiment.

"Good morning," she greeted brightly. "Is that the new baby? What a tiny mite!" Then turned to smile at Minnie, but, as usual, the child had disappeared.

"Mary, I have news for you," she continued evenly. "I know of an excellent opportunity for a nice girl like you, and I'm sure you will want to take advantage of it. Mrs. Akers, my sister, needs a maid for her little Marjorie, and I am going to get you the place. Your work will be twice as easy as it is here; you will go to Newport in the summer, and Palm Beach in the winter, with Fifth Avenue in between; your salary will at once be greatly increased, with certain advancement if you do your best. Now, what do you say? Would you like to have the chance?"

"Oh, ma'am," gasped Mary, "it will be beautiful! 'Tis too good to me you are! Sure any girl would be that pleased! Though I dunno——"

"You don't know!"

"'Tis the children, ma'am," pleaded Mary. "What will Minnie and Anastasia say?"

"The children!" Then, wistfully, "Do you love them so much?"

"Sure the feel of thim's good in me arms," admitted the girl shyly.

"But you can't let such a chance slip," argued Miss Sherwin excitedly, as though, indeed, she were trying to convince herself.

"No, ma'am, sure I can't," agreed Mary slowly. "Don't think it's ungrateful I am. It's me that knows it's a beautiful chance you're giving me."

"Yes, and don't you worry about the children or anyone else. They soon forget." And if there was a tinge of bitterness in the statement it was unconscious.

A hurried clatter sounded in the hall outside, and Minnie's head was thrust precipitately through the doorway.

"He's come!" she shouted. "He's come!"

The piano downstairs took up the announcement with two sonorous chords. "Well, little ones," it seemed to tell the canaries, "your pretty lirts have been quite amusing. Now hear what I can do," and it swung into the majestic twentieth prelude of Chopin.

"Who's come?" asked Miss Sherwin. She had grown pale.

"Mr. Björsted, the archyteck, ma'am, him as built this Nursery. He landed yisterday from overseas, and straight to this house he come. He's that fond of childer, ma'am!"

Miss Sherwin stared incredulously. The piano broke into a gay little Hungarian dance. A wave of pure joy overwhelmed her. Catching Minnie Grogan close to her breast she kissed the freckled cheek passionately, then stumbled out of the room.

Minnie recovered first. With furious indignation she thrust a vindictive tongue out as far as she could at the retreating figure of her benefactress.

"God bless us!" prayed Mary. "Minnie Grogan, you bad-hearted child! To do that to Miss Sherwin that loves you!"

"Yes she does!" jeered Minnie. "Just the way I love God!"

"Minnie!" implored Mary weakly. "Don't you love God?"

The child frowned impatiently.

"Sure. But it ain't the huggin' and kissin' kind."

"God bless us, listen to her!" again invoked pious Mary. "What does the likes of you know of the huggin' and kissin' kind? Get along with you before I put you out, you and your ways!"

Minnie grinned provokingly. "I love you, Mary," she drawled as she made for the door.

Sure, children were the divil, thought Mary. The huggin' and kissin' kind no less! And she blushed as a vivid remembrance of Terry Riordan crossed her mind. She glanced at the clock. It was noon. She would catch him as he came from work and tell him of the wonderful place in store for her. Hastily covering the new baby in its crib she stole down past the matron's office where Miss Sherwin was sitting with her face in her hands.

The attitude appeared despairing, but it belied Miss Sherwin's emotion, for her heart was singing within her with so glad a voice that the whole world was forced to join the triumphant chorus, "He's come back! He's come back." Marriage was history's greatest swindle; women were always its unhappy dupes, said her former reasoning. But her heart refused to be daunted and only answered in more glorious strains, "He's come back! He's come back!"

Then an awful thought struck her. He might have ceased to care! He might even be married already! Why certainly! That couldn't fail to be so! She had been cold, even faintly derisive. He had gone away hurt, and she had heard nothing from him since. She had sold her inheritance for a pitiful mess of potage, and now God was giving her a glimpse of its glory, now when for her it was too late!

From the open window near her the street sounds came filtering in. She was unconscious of them until a voice that she recognized penetrated her understanding.

"What is it? Ain't it glad yez are?" it said.

A pregnant pause. Then an angrily despairing masculine reply.

"And is it me that came up this street to tell you of me good luck and this is what I get! Me that works from six in the morning till six of the night to make a home for you against the time when ye'd be me wife, and this is what I get! Whin the boss told me this day that I could work until tin each night, wid double pay for overtime, wasn't it me that was glad to have the chanct so's I could marry you the quicker? Haven't I stud round and seen ye cuddlin' thim little Eyetalians and Hunks wid me heart in me mouth for the time whin it 'ud be a child of our own ye'd be hushin', and this is what I get! So it's to be Newport in the summer and Palm Beach in the winter, and me not at all."

"But Terry," coaxed the frightened Mary, "we'll be in the city between times. You can come and see me then just the same."

"Oh, I can, can I? Whin? Before six in the morning or after tin at night? Do you think I can be traipsin' up to Fifth Avenue at night, me that has to be at the shop in the morning? How long between times

will you be in the city anyway? No, no, me girl. Go to your fine place. Never fear for me. It's me that can find plenty amusement and no need to save me money. Goodbye, me girl, goodbye, for faith and troth it's little ye'll see of me agin before ye go."

"Terry!" called Mary, "Terry!"

But no answer came back. Then a door slammed, almost cutting a sob in half, and Miss Sherwin heard no more. So Mary's poor little romance was shattered too, and through her unfeeling agency! She regretted bitterly having meddled. She had meant to help, to save the pretty thing from the soul-destroying disappointments that seemed inevitably to follow marriage. Now she almost subscribed to the weakly, sentimental view that those disappointments were worth risking.

"Miss Sherwin!" called the matron's voice, "Oh, Miss Sherwin," as she entered, "I want to present to you Mr. Hjalmar Björsted, the Nursery's first benefactor."

A moment of tense and most confused silence. Then,

"How do you do, Greta," he said quietly.

"Mary told me this morning that you drew the plans for this building. I had not known it. How came you to be interested in what I have liked to call my institution?"

"Many years ago when the association was considering closing this branch because of the unfitness of the old building, Mr. Björsted heard of the matter and offered to make up the deficiency in the fund for a new building by contributing his architect's services," volunteered Mrs. Murray, pleasantly. "We relied upon his friendship and advice for innumerable things the first couple of years. When he left the country and planned never to return we were quite stunned with our loss. But

shortly after, *you* came, Miss Sherwin, and took up the work where he left off."

"The Nursery certainly was the gainer," bowed Mr. Björsted. "And don't let my small part in its establishment interfere with your sense of proprietorship. I assure you I am quite willing to endow you with my portion."

Miss Sherwin blushed hotly. It sounded like the marriage service.

Immediately the guests began to arrive. Both Fifth and Second Avenues supplied them. Annunziata's mother rubbed elbows with Mrs. Arnold Forrestier, and Miss Gwendolyn Van Der Stuck poured tea for Gluka's aunt. Four languages, three of them with variations, vied for supremacy within the room, and the colors of the festive costumes shone with the brilliancy of a futurist painting. Presently Madame Moyén, the celebrated soprano, was at the door, and then the program of entertainment began.

Throughout the afternoon Miss Sherwin had moved with easy grace through the polyglot crowd, greeting friend and beneficiary alike with delightful charm. No one would have guessed that her mind was a chaos of protest and wonder: Why had she been such a coward that time long ago, and why had he returned now, to move so calmly and closely at her side as he had all this afternoon?

The opening address, the kindergartners' chorus, the boys' drill and the girls' graceful folk dance, proceeded in orderly progression, and Miss Sherwin was perfectly conventional and polite. Then Madame Moyén advanced to the center of the room and took up her position to sing.

The sweetness of the two Brahms songs interpreted by the wonderful voice took hold upon Miss Sherwin's

music-starved soul, until the exquisite sense of the nearness of the man beside her became almost unbearable. Wild, unruly longings overcame her. Why, oh, why did a woman allow herself to learn to care? But having learned, oh God, how sweet it must be to yield!

The number was finished, and she was trembling and shaken. The audience applauded wildly, and Madame Moyén bowed and bowed. It continued insistently, so she smilingly selected a sheet of music from the roll on the piano, gave it to her accompanist, and he immediately struck the opening bars of Grieg's "*Ich Liebe Dich*."

The first notes of tender declaration sounded, and Greta Sherwin rose from her chair. She could not endure it, not that song. Passing quickly from the room she gained the hall and climbed the stairs.

"Du mein Gedanke,
Du mein Sein und Werden."

floated up after her in the clear, vibrant notes of the soprano. She fled into the tiny diet kitchen and closed the door, but not until the music swelled with pleading passion, and

"I love but thee
Now and eternally."

beat in upon her heart. She pressed her hands against her ears, desperately, until the song was finished. A shrill little voice in the next room gained her attention finally.

"What do you know about this, Mary!" it exclaimed disgustedly, "Pop's back again!"

"Is he?" came the singularly spiritless answer for light-hearted Mary.

"Mom's got him downstairs now! She's taken him back again!"

"And what else would she do, I'd like to know?" was the sharp retort. "Ain't he her man?"

"Mary! You're cryin'! Who's

hurted you? I'll kill them!" wailed the stricken Minnie.

A gust of stormy sobs was the only answer.

"Mary," fearfully whispered the child, "you ain't been run away from, too? You ain't got no man, have you, Mary?" Then, as there came no denial, "Oh, what did you go and do it for? Didn't I tell you what it 'ud be? You're as bad as mom! I wisht men never was made!"

"Hush, Minnie darlin'. Sure it's not their fault. When they was made they was put nice and safe in the Garden of Eden where they could come to no hurt. A woman got them turned out, and we've all had the job of carin' for them ever since."

"But Mary *you* shouldn't be carin' for no man; you should be carin' for *us*. We've got to have you. If you leave us we'll just *die*!"

"No, no, Minnie. Here I'm only earnin' me ways by keeping you clean and handin' you your victuals. There's plenty can take me place here and small loss. But no one can take me place with me own man, for that's God's doing."

"But we'd be good to you. We wouldn't make you cry."

"Minnie darlin', them's the desolate women who have no one to cry over and get hurted about. The heart in them turns to stone from too little workin'. Take Miss Sherwin now. A sweeter, finer lady niver lived, but love you as you want to be loved she can't, because she's never taken someone close to her heart and held him there for better or for worse. No woman knows how to care in truth for anything until her whole life and hope are placed on just one thing, and more times than half that thing is a man. Maybe he disappoints her, Minnie, like your father does your mother, but if the heart in her keeps seeing the good in him, while the eyes can't help seeing

the bad, sure she comes out ahead anyway, and belike makes him do the same."

"Oh!" murmured Miss Sherwin. "Oh!"

Then she buried her face in her hands and cried as though her heart would break.

Hurried steps had ascended the stairs, but she had not heard them. Neither did the knock on the door arouse her. Not, indeed, till a pair of arms encircled her, and a voice trembled in her ear.

"Greta! Sweetheart! Greta, don't cry!" did her sobbing cease.

"Hjalmar, you do care? You're not married to someone else, are you?"

"Married to someone else? What do you think I am made of?"

"I hope of the same old stuff—of the very same old stuff."

Incredulous hope shone in his eyes. "What can you mean—Oh, what *can* you mean?" he whispered.

"Du mein Gedanke,
Du mein Sein und Werden,"

she murmured against his coat.

As they were leaving the room Mary intercepted them.

"If you please, ma'am, if it's the same to you, you needn't speak to Mrs. Akers. I think I'll stay."

"Mary!" exclaimed Miss Sherwin mischievously, "do you mean to say you are going to give up such a wonderful chance?"

"Yes, ma'am," admitted Mary, with eyes cast down, "if it's the same to you, ma'am, I think I'll stay."

"But why, Mary? Won't you tell me why?"

"'Tis because, ma'am," stammered Mary desperately, "because—I—I find I have a previous engagement."

Miss Sherwin laughed joyously.

"Then keep it, Mary, by all means keep it!" she said.



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A SENSE OF HUMOR

WHAT HE OBJECTED TO

"I SEE that the war has already had its effect upon the names that are to be borne by the rising generation in England and other European countries," Roger Sullivan, the Democratic "boss" of Illinois, said to a group of politicians resting at French Lick Springs after the rigors of the Senatorial primary election, which Sullivan carried.

"They've begun naming babies after Liège and Namur and the Marne River in the countries of the Allies, and Germany will be full of von Kluck Millers and Verdun Schmidts for the next thirty years, if the patriotic parents of the new arrivals this autumn keep it up. It reminds me of the experience of Martin Joyce, one of my precinct captains on the west side. Martin became the proud father of a girl not long ago and at the proper time took her over to Father Judge for baptism.

"The christening party was gathered around the font when the priest leaned over to Martin and whispered:

"What's the name to be?"

"Hazel," says Joyce in the same kind of a whisper.

"The good man gave him a hard look for a couple of seconds. Then he stepped closer and growled behind his hand:

"Aren't there any saints in the calendar that you have to be namin' the child for a nut?"

INCONSIDERATE

Pup: Great Cats! That's a nerve! Somebody has put up a building right where I buried a bone!—*Puck*.

A MARITAL ATROCITY

"What's the trouble at Wombat's house?"

"Wombat accuses his wife of using dum-dum biscuit."—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

FIXING THE BLAME

"See here, milkman, I don't think the milk you are giving me is pure."

"Madam, to the pure all things are pure."—*Life*.

A BIT TIRED

A somewhat weather-beaten tramp, being asked what was the matter with his coat, replied, "Insomnia: it hasn't had a nap in ten years."—*Christian Register*.

ANOTHER TRIAL

Financier: That is not the same tale that you told me a few days ago.

Beggar: No, sir. But you didn't believe that one.—*London Mail*.

NOT WHAT HE MEANT

The Host. It's beginning to rain; you'd better stay to dinner.

The Guest: Oh, thanks very much; but it's not bad enough for that.—*Yale Record*.

A SOP TO CERBERUS

"Bud" Renwick was eight years old and very much of a boy. He lived a few doors below his grandmother's house, and made the most of the opportunities offered by this proximity. Mrs. Renwick, senior, was indulgent, and Bud generally received largesse from her hands in the form of sweets or fruit whenever he visited her.

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A SENSE OF HUMOR

When, however, his grandmother found him bringing his playmates regularly to share in the "handout," she told Bud that while she was perfectly willing to gratify his sweet tooth, the idea of feeding all the children of the neighborhood did not appeal to her.

One afternoon shortly after this, Bud appeared at his grandmother's and asked for a banana, leaving a little girl outside to wait for him.

"You may have one for yourself," she said, "but you had better stay in here while you eat it."

Bud received the banana thankfully, but he did not linger.

Some minutes later Mrs. Renwick had occasion to go to the door, and saw Bud on the porch, eating the banana, and his friend watching him.

"Bud Renwick!" she exclaimed. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself to eat all that banana without offering at least part of it to the little girl!"

Bud looked a bit uncomfortable, but after a moment's hesitation, he answered:

"It's all right, grandma; I said 'excuse me.'"

THE PITY OF IT

Mr. Gabb: Freshmen at the University of Pennsylvania are forbidden to smoke cigarettes.

Fond Mother: Oh, dear me! Now Oswald won't get a bit of exercise.—*Buffalo Express*.

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING

The dentist had just moved into a place previously occupied by a baker, when a friend called.

"Pardon me a moment," said the dentist, "while I dig off those enamel letters of 'Bakeshop' from the front window."

"Why not merely dig off the 'B' and let it go at that?" suggested the friend.—*Boston Transcript*.

A COMFORT TO HER

Mrs. Clancy, observing an unusual stir and bustle within and without the Dorsey home, paused to inquire the meaning of it.

"Oh, how fine we look with our clean lace curtains an' the fence painted an' th' old man sweepin' up th' back yard," she observed to Mrs. Dorsey. "What's goin' on, at all, that ye'er puttin' on so much style?"

"Didn't you hear?" Mrs. Dorsey returned, crossing her arms on the gate. "Our Dinny is to be let out av th' pinitin'chry to-day. He'll be home to-morrah evenin'."

"To-morrah, is it?" Mrs. Clancy rejoined. "Sure, I thought he was sint away for tin years!"

"He was. But he got two years off fer good behavior," the proud mother explained. Mrs. Clancy turned her glance to the skies.

"Fer good behavior! Look at that, now!" she exclaimed. "Isn't it a blessin' to have a fine bye like that growin' up to be a comfort to you?"

SHE HAD HER LIMITATIONS

"When I hear these efficiency engineers talking so much these days about wasted motions and misdirected energy," observed C. P. J. Mooney, the distinguished editor of the *Memphis Appeal*, at a recent gathering of publishers, "I often think there is more in fitting the man or woman to the job than most people realize. One of our young matrons learned that fact this summer when she made a cake with her own fair hands to ornament the table at a luncheon she had planned.

"It was to be a nut cake of pre-tentious build, and early in the morning she called to the kitchen Lindy Lee, a little colored girl who helped around, and gave her a big bowl of nuts.

"'Now Lindy, I'm going to need



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A SENSE OF HUMOR

a lot of nuts for this cake,' she said, 'and I want you to crack these for me. You can go out there under the tree where it's nice and cool and get busy.'

"Lindy delivered the shelled nuts in due course of time, but when her mistress essayed to put the finishing touches on her cake, she found she was running short of material.

"'Here, Lindy, this isn't going to be enough to cover this cake,' she said. 'You'll have to crack me some more nuts right away.'

"'Oh, my, Mis' Lucy, I can't crack no mo' o' them nuts,' Lindy protested with her hand to her face. 'My jaws is all sore now!'"

QUITE NATURAL

"Why are women so crazy over these battered-up football-players?"

"I suppose it is because of the innate feminine love of remnants."—*Baltimore American*.

AUSTRIAN WAR LAMENT

Or, Pronunciation Made Easy

We Austrians cannot stand the drizzle

Of Russian shrapnel at Przemyśl!

The Russian hordes are in the track of

Our noble men who flee to Cracow.

A million Cossacks may debouch,
At any moment, at Olkusz!

A million more reported are
At Kamionkastrumilowa!

And yet another million have
Consumed all food at Jaresław!

Ah! ev'rything they cleared—as well
as

The larders of Jaszarokszcellas!

Then down they poured, like molten
lava,

On rural, innocent Suczawa!

And now they march, with hungry
screech,

On harmless little Drohobycz!

Curs'd be the foreign rascals, greasy,
Who chased us at Tustanowice!

Steel motor-cars—ten guns in *each*
car—

Are rolling on towards Wieliczka!

How truly awful will it be
If Cossacks mangle us at Stryj!

No one may even dare to guess of
The patriots who fell at Rzeszow.

Of Czechs, 'tis said, they've buried a
Battalion at Csikszereda!

As at the banquet of Belshazzar,
The finger writes at Njiregyhaza!

So, ere the sky with dawn grows
streaky,

Let's fly to dear old Zaleszczyki!

—*London Opinion*.

WORTH TRYING

"Let's drop into this restaurant."

"I don't believe I care to eat any-
thing."

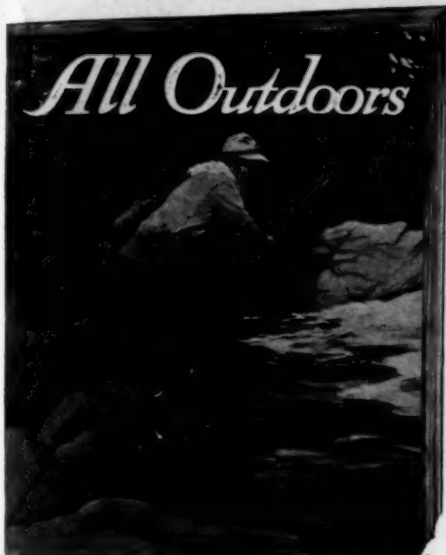
"Well, come in and get a new hat
for your old one, anyway."—*Boston Transcript*.

WHY HE WANTED TO KNOW

The negro porters in one of our large railroad terminals are greatly given to argument on questions concerning the correct use of the language, and frequent recourse is had to the dictionary in the news-stall there in order to settle their disputes.

One day, a number of porters, who had been engaged in a heated discussion for many minutes, approached the stall and requested permission to consult the dictionary.

Followed an excited thumbing of the book, with whispered ejaculations of "Lemme see!" "Lemme,"



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A SENSE OF HUMOR

from individuals. Finally the spokesman turned proudly to a little darkey who waited on the outskirts of the group, and called to him.

"There!" he said. "Yo' see. Didn' Ah tell yo'? 'Prevaricator . . . a liar,' Man! *That's* what you are."

POETRY AND READING MATTER

"I won't pay one cent for my advertising this week," declared the storekeeper angrily to the editor of the country paper. "You told me you'd put the notice of my shoe polish in with the reading matter."

"And didn't I do it?" inquired the editor.

"No, sir!" roared the advertiser. "No, sir, you did not! You put it in the column with a mess of poetry, that's where you put it!"—*Ladies' Home Journal*.

AGILE PARENT

"Papa, what is an escutcheon?"

"Why?"

"This story says there was a blot on his escutcheon."

"Oh, yes! An escutcheon is a light-colored vest. He had probably been carrying a fountain pen."—*Houston Post*.

STRATEGY ILLUSTRATED

First Urchin: Say, Chimmie, wot's dis strategy t'ing dey talk about?

Second Urchin: Well, it's like dis: Supposin' yer run out of ammunition an' yer don't want de enemy ter know it, den it's strategy ter keep on firin'.—*Boston Transcript*.

A German professor from Eyser
Once sat on a somnolent geyser.

When the geyser awoke
(And here comes the joke)

The guide said, "There goes a wise
guy, sir." —*Life*.

TAYLOR'S OFFER

Few laymen are able to appreciate the mental strain upon the editors of periodicals involved in the examination of the flood of manuscripts that pours in upon them. Even though a majority of the offerings merit only a cursory inspection, all of them must be looked at lest a nugget be concealed in the mass.

It is perhaps fortunate for the peace of mind of all concerned that most manuscripts are submitted and returned by mail so that the personal equation does not enter into the matter; but while Bert Leston Taylor was editor of *Judge* a lantern-jawed specimen from the Jersey wilds managed to evade all the outer guards and work his way into the sanctum. Once in the presence, he laid upon the desk a finger-printed slip of paper on which he had written his prize joke.

It was near the close of a hard day and "B. L. T." was approaching brain-fag after wading through hand-made humor in prose and verse since breakfast-time. He glanced at the Bertillon exhibit and then at its alleged author.

"What's the idea?" he demanded.

"What'll you gimme for that?" his caller asked.

"Well, I'll be generous," Taylor returned. "I'll give you five yards' start."

ALL SHE COULD HANDLE!

In Iowa they are telling a story of a German farmer in one of the northern counties who has for some time been posing as an apostle of progressive agriculture. Following the lead of such men as Hoard and Wallace he has been preaching against the practice of growing nothing but corn and small grains, and has been advocating cattle, silos, and alfalfa.

Getting Well—and Enjoying It



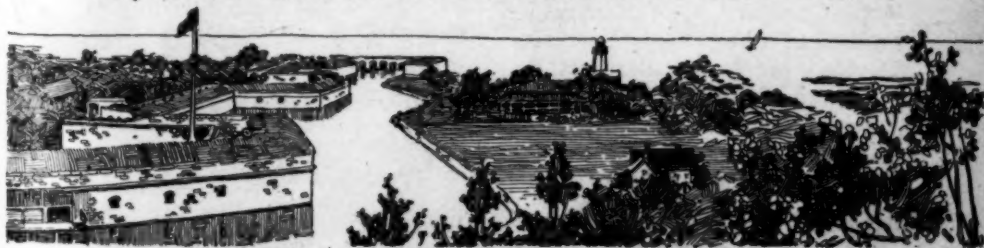
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A SENSE OF HUMOR

"It iss cows, cows, cows vich iss needed in dis country. Dey vill bring back der fertility. Ve haf altogether too much corn, corn, corn. Ve should haf a hoonderd thousand cows in Iowa to make us all rich."

"That's pretty good doctrine, Otto," said a member of the State Legislature to him one day. "I suppose you practice what you preach. How many head of stock have you on your half section?"

"Vell," said Otto, hesitatingly, "I haf now ten cows."

The Legislator expressed surprise. "Why," said he, "I expected to hear that you had at least two or three hundred. How is that?"

"Vell," replied the German sadly, "you see ten cows iss all mine frau can milk."

VERY CLASSIC

Mischa Elman tells a story of his early youth. He was playing at a reception given by a Russian prince, and played Beethoven's "Kreutzer Sonata," which has several long and impressive rests in it. During one of these rests a motherly old lady leaned forward, patted him on the shoulder, and said: "Play something you know, dear."—*Argonaut*.

INTRODUCING THE PREACHER

Fifty years ago the name of Dr. Fuller was synonymous with pulpit eloquence throughout the Baptist South. Shortly after the close of the Civil War he was making a number of evangelistic addresses through South Carolina. One Sunday he preached to a huge outdoor meeting of colored people near Beaufort, the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Murchison, a colored clergyman of limited education, but strong native talent. Like many of his class, his prayers and sermons abounded in

set phrases and metaphors which were brought into play with frequency and effect. But it must have startled good Dr. Fuller to hear his sermon prefaced by the concluding invocation of Brother Murchison's accustomed prayer:

"An' now, O Lawd, bress de feeble words which am about to fall from de sinful an' polluted lips ob thy unworthy servant. Amen!"

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE

A Washington business man, who had in his employ a darky who, ambitious for learning, has entered a night school, has told the negro that any questions which he would like to ask concerning his lessons will be gladly answered by him, the employer. Accordingly, the darky has from time to time submitted to the boss papers on English composition, whenever he got "stuck."

Among the last was given a sentence containing a grammatical error to be corrected. The sentence was: "The horse and the cow is in the field."

"Have a look at it, Tom," said the boss. "What's wrong with that sentence?"

The darky, much more versed in the rules of politeness than those of grammar, said promptly:

"The lady should be mentioned first."

HER HOTEL BILL

Mrs. Gordon was spending some time at Palm Beach, and during her stay she wrote her husband saying:

DEAR WILL:

I enclose the hotel bill.

Will wrote back:

DEAR EDITH:

I enclose check, but please don't buy any more hotels at this price. They are robbing you.



In all the attempts that have been made in this country to establish a weekly publication expressive of the lighter side of American life and letters, none has so completely won its way to popular favor as

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A SENSE OF HUMOR

HABIT

Doctor: I have to report, sir, that you are the father of triplets.

Politician: Impossible! I'll demand a recount.—*Puck*.

IMPORTANT

Edwards: Will you dine with us this evening? We are going to have a pheasant.

Eaton: And how many guests?—*Boston Transcript*.

THE FOUR AGES OF HAIR

Bald,

Fuzz,

Is,

Was.

—*New York Sun*.

THE USUAL WAY

Mrs. Rurel: I want you to kill a couple of chickens for dinner.

New Cook (late from the city): Yes, mam. Which car shall I do it with?—*Puck*.

PUZZLED

Old Lady: I've brought back this war-map you sold me yesterday, Mr. Brown. It's not up to date. I've been looking all the morning for Armageddon, and can't find it marked anywhere.—*Punch*.

WHEN TALK BEGINS

Hostess: People are very dull to-night, Adolph. I really can't get them to talk.

Host: Play something dearest.—*Judy*.

A DRY ATMOSPHERE

I like this quaint little mountain village of yours, waiter. I suppose I can get plenty of oxygen here.

"No, sir; we've got local option."—*Sacred Heart Review*.

PEACE AT ANY PRICE

"What is the shape of the earth?" asked the teacher.

"Round."

"How do you know it's round?"

"All right, it's square, then; I don't want to start any argument."—*Columbia Jester*.

MUCH WORSE

"Mirandy, fo' de Lawd's sake, don't let dem chickens outer dis here yard. Shut dat gate."

"What fur, Aleck; dey'll come home, won't dey?"

"'Deed dey won't. Dey'll go home."—*Columbia Jester*.

PRODIGAL

Nurse: Why, Bobby, you selfish little boy. Why didn't you give your sister a piece of your apple?

Bobby: I gave her the seeds. She can plant 'em and have a whole orchard.—*Judge*.

"LABBY" AS A DIPLOMAT

In Mr. Thorold's "Life of Henry Labouchere" this story is quoted: The Grand Duchess of Tuscany had a venerable maid of honor about seventy years of age. She had piercing black eyes, and looked like an old postchaise, painted up, and with new lamps. "How old do you think I am?" she once asked me, with a simpering smile, that caused my blood to run cold. I hesitated and then said: "Twenty." "Flatterer," she replied, tapping me with her fan. "I am twenty-five."—*London Evening Standard*.

HIS GOOD FORTUNE

Optimist (who has just been struck by a passing motor-car): "Glory be! If this isn't a piece o' luck! Sure, 'tis the docthor himself that's in ut!"—*Punch*.